

CTHULHU
IN WONDERLAND:

The Madness of Alice

By Lewis Carroll
& Kent David Kelly

Issuance #1 in the Interminable Series, **PENNY DREADFUL MASH-UPS.**

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DEDICATION

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*To the millions of readers and dreamers
who honor Lewis Carroll,
Howard Phillips Lovecraft,
and Alice Pleasance Liddell.
May you find that your dreams
are but reflections of all that is to come.
Pleasance and nightmares.*

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CHAPTER 1

Down the Zoog Hole

Alice Pleasance Liddell—daughter of an abhorred and accursed bloodline, damned to a downward spiral into madness—was growing rather tremulous while sitting with her sister Lorina on the Isis riverbank and having nothing scream-worthy rise up from depths to devour her. Once or twice, she had gazed into the fell tome her sister was reading, the *Kitab al-Azif*, known to tortured souls by the name of its Latinized Wormius translation, the *Necronomicon*. Alice peeped over Lorina's shoulder. That eldritch grimoire was filled with demonomaniacal eighth-century ravings of the Mad Arab, Abdul Alhazred. It overflowed with slithering circles and writhing sigils, but no actual pictures or conversations.

And what is the use of a Mythos tome pertaining to the Slaughter of Humanity and the cataclysmic End of Days, thought Alice, without pictures or conversations?

So she was considering in her own slightly blasted mind (as well as she could, for she was already faintly mad, and the heat made her feel very sleepy and squamous) whether the pleasure of inscribing an Elder Sign would be worth the trouble of getting the lancet out of Mister Dodgson's boat and bleeding Lorina's veins for ink, when suddenly a White Zoog with pink nictitating eyes and tentaculoid whiskers slithered close by her.

There was nothing so *very* remarkable in that, nor did Alice think it so *very* much out of the realm of sanity to hear the Zoog chant unto itself, "Iä! Shub-Niggurath, I come! I shall be late!" (When she thought it over afterwards, it occurred to her that she ought to have wondered at this, for Zoogs do not worship Shub-Niggurath on a normal basis. At the time, however, it all seemed perfectly unnatural.)

But when the Zoog actually took a Yuggothian trapezohedron *out of its waistcoat pocket*, and gazed into it, and then shrieked and hurried on, Alice started to her feet, for it flashed across her precarious mind that she had never before seen a Zoog with either a waistcoat, or a trapezohedron to take out of it. (A Mi-Go? Most certainly. But never a Zoog.)

Burning with the moth-like compulsion for self-annihilation (which, tragically, is common to protagonists in Lovecraftian tales of madness), Alice hurried across the field after the White Zoog, and unfortunately was just in time to see it pop down a large Zoog hole under the Oxfordshire hedge. In another moment down went Alice after it, never once considering how in the world she was to get out again. The Zoog hole might plummet down into the netherworld far beneath the Sign of Koth and so to the frozen wastes of Kadath itself, but what man knows Kadath? (And what girl, for that matter?)

The Zoog hole went straight on like a gargantuan parched artery for some way, and then dipped suddenly down, so suddenly that Alice had not a moment to think about stopping herself before she found herself falling down what seemed to be a very deep Cyclopean Abyss leading down unto the core of the Earth itself, far deeper than even K'n-yan, N'kai, or the black seeping throne of Tsathoggua. Either the Cyclopean Abyss was very deep, or she fell very slowly, for she had plenty of time as she went down to gaze about her, and to wonder whether her mind would teeter over the brink of sanity and finally cause her to slobber and rage; or, to wake in and find herself stuck in a bathing machine.

First, she tried to look down and make out what she was coming to, but it was too dark to see anything but the Abyss itself, gazing back into her. Then she looked at the pulsating, tumescent sides of the Abyss, and noticed that they were gorged with cupboards and book-shelves. Here and there she saw maps revealing the untold netherworld and portraits of metamorphosed Shoggoth victims, hung upon little pegs. She took down a jar from one of the shelves as she passed. It was labeled "YE ESSENTIAL SALTES," but to her great disappointment, beside the few flecks of a dead man it was empty. She did not like to drop the jar, for fear of killing somebody underneath her, so she managed to put it back into one of the cupboards as she fell past it.

Well! thought Alice to herself. *After such an Abyssal plunge as this, I shall think nothing of tumbling downstairs! How brave and mad the doomed Liddell clan will all think me at home! Why, I wouldn't say anything about it, even if I fell off the top of the house!* (Which was very likely true. Death comes for us all, and its silences are vast and limitless as the cold, cruel depths of the void, where the black planets roll without name.)

Down, down, down. Would the fall never come to an end? “I wonder how many miles I’ve fallen by this time?” she said aloud. “I must be getting somewhere near the center of the Earth, and the grotto where the mad pipers of Chaos greet the materialization of Nyarlathotep. Let me see. That would be four thousand miles down, I think—” (for, you see, Alice had learnt things of this sort in her governess-led Cthulhoid rituals, although this was not a very good opportunity for showing off her forbidden knowledge, as there was no shrieking cultist to listen to her. Still, it was good practice to say it over) “—yes, that’s about the right distance. But then I wonder what proto-dimension or Black Rolling Hasturian Cinder I’ve got to?” (Alice had not the slightest idea what a proto-dimension was, or a Black Rolling Hasturian Cinder either, but she thought they were nice grand words to say.)

Presently she began again. “I wonder if I shall fall fight *through* the Earth, and hurtle thence upward through the limitless planes of oblivion to kneel before Chaos itself, and to scribe my name in blood in the Black Book of Azathoth! How funny it’ll seem to come out among the mad piping gods at the end of the universe, who squirm upon fanged tentacles with their gullets hanging downwards! The Entropies, I think—” (she was rather glad there *was* no one listening, this time, as it didn’t sound at all the right word) “—but I shall have to ask them what the name of the edge all the universes is, you know. Please, Madam Spawn of the Great Old Ones, is this New Zealand? Or Australia?” (and she tried to curtsy as she spoke—fancy, *curtseying* as you’re plummeting into an Abyss! Do you think you could manage it?) “And what an ignorant little girl those Black Gods of the Annihilation of All would think me for asking! No, it’ll never do to ask. Perhaps I shall see it written up somewhere. *Cultes des Goules*, perhaps. Or in the apocalyptic revelations of the *Seven Cryptical Books of Hsan*.”

Down, down, down. There was nothing else to do, so Alice soon began babbling to herself again. “Dinah of Ulthar will miss me very much tonight, I should think!” (Dinah was the cat of the Liddell household, a guardian from afar whose true powers remain a mystery to man, to Jabberwock and to Beast.) “I hope they’ll remember her saucer of milk at tea time. Dinah, my dear! I wish you were down here with me! There are no Moonbeasts for you to devour here, I’m afraid, but you might catch a Dimensional Shambler, and that’s rather like a Moonbeast, you know. But do cats eat Shamblers, I wonder?” And here Alice began to slaver and rave, and went on drooling and babbling to herself, in an hysterical sort of way, “Do cats eat Shamblers? Do cats eat Shamblers?” and sometimes “Do Shamblers eat cats?” For, you see, as she couldn’t answer either question, it didn’t much matter which way she put it.

She felt that she was dozing off to fall prey to the susurrating whispers of dread Cthulhu who lurks dead and dreaming in his tomb in R’lyeh, and had just begun to dream that she was walking with Dinah into the maws of madness, and was saying to her guardian, very earnestly, “Now, Dinah, tell me the truth. Did you ever eat a Shambler?” when suddenly, *thump! thump!* down she came upon a heap of sticks and dry leaves and marrow-sucked bones, and the fall was over. (She kicked over a young child’s shattered skull, in which was lodged a sharpened bottle fragment, whose label was inscribed “ORANGE MARMALADE.”)

Alice was not a bit hurt (outside of her rapidly deteriorating mental condition), and she jumped up onto her feet in a moment. She looked up, but it was all dark overhead. Before her loomed another long passage, and the White Zoog was still in sight, scurrying discombobulatedly down it. There was not a moment to be lost. Away went Alice like a Boreal wind, and was just in time to hear the Zoog shriek, as it turned a corner, “Oh my tentacular whiskers and nictitating membranes, how late it’s getting!”

She was close behind it when she turned the corner, but the Zoog was no longer to be seen. She found herself in a long, low hall redolent of nitre and the mouldering spices of mummification employed by the Serpent People, a veritable Hall of the Dead which was lit up by a row of phosphorescent ichor-gorged crystal prisms hanging from the roof.

There were necropolis doors all round the Hall, but they were all locked and bloodied by dread Signs (of the Elder, Voorish and Yellow varieties). And when Alice had been all the way down one side and up the other, trying every door, she cackled maniacally, pouted and walked sadly down the middle, wondering how she was ever to get out again.

Suddenly she came upon a little pentacular table, all made of chthonic crystal. There was nothing on it except a shadow of utmost dread and a tiny silver key (inscribed "R. CARTER"), and Alice's first thought was that it might belong to one of the doors departing the Hall of the Dead. But, alas! Either the sigils were too squirming, or the key was too small, but at any rate it would not open any of them. However, on the second time round, she came upon a blood-red curtain she had not noticed before, and behind it was a little Rat-Thing door about fifteen inches high. She tried the oddly humming silver key in the lock, and to her great horror it fitted!

Alice opened the door unto the Kingdom of the Rat-Things and found that it led into a dung-infested passage, replete with non-Euclidean angles hinting at the encroachment of sinister dimensions from far beyond our own. She knelt and looked along the dread passage into the loveliest cemetery garden you ever saw. How she longed to get out of that Ghoulish Hall of the Dead with its flickering shadows and whispers of spice-stench, and to wander about among those beds of grey corpse-flowers and those bone-chilling fountains! But she could not even get her skull through the doorway, for a Rat-Thing Alice was not. (Yet.)

And even if my skull would go through, thought Alice, what if a dimensional vortex empowered by the simultaneous teleportation of a Rat-Thing were to cause my implosion, or decapitation? My head would be of very little use without my shoulders. Well, to me, at least. Oh, how I wish I could speak the black incantation of Ibn Shacabao and shut myself up like a Yuggothian telescope! I think I could, if I only knew how to begin. For, you see, so many sanity-leeching forebodings had crawled inside her psyche lately, that Alice had begun to think that very few things were really impossible, and that humanity is blessed to still be ignorant of the true horrific nature of the metaverse.

There seemed to be no use in waiting by the dread little door and to be feasted upon, so Alice went back to the pentacular table, half hoping she

might find another dimensional key on it, or at any rate a grimoire full of blasphemous strictures for shutting people up like Yuggothian telescopes. This time, she found a little poison bottle on it (“Which certainly was not here before and is direct evidence of an unbeheld entity from beyond lurking about and apt to hasten my demise,” said Alice), and round the neck of the bottle was a twisted papyrus label, with the words “DRINKETH OF ME” frantically scribbled on it in faltering, spidery letters.

It was all very well to say “Drinketh of me,” but the tormented little Alice was not going to do *that* in a hurry. “No, I’ll look first,” she said, “and see whether it’s marked ‘*poison*’ or not.” For she had read several unspeakable little histories about children who had got trapped, sacrificed, and eaten up by Proto-Shoggoths and other unpleasant Things, all because they *would* not remember the simple rules their elders had taught them: Such as, that a vorpal blade will vampirically devour your id if you hold it for too long; and that if you cut your finger *very* deeply with a Nightgaunt talon, it usually bleeds black ichor instead of blood; and she had never forgotten that if you drink much from a bottle marked ‘*poison*,’ it is almost certain to disagree with you, sooner or later.

However, this bottle was not marked ‘*poison*,’ so Alice ventured to taste it, and finding it very nice (it had, in fact, a sort of mixed flavor of phlogiston, quintessence, aether and toasted cheese), she very soon finished it off before it could finish her off in turn.

* * * *

“What a phantasmagoric feeling!” said Alice. “I must be shutting up like a Yuggothian telescope.”

And so it was indeed. She was now only ten inches tall, fit prey for the Rat-Things and They who command them, and her face brightened up at the thought that she was now the right size and fragility for going through the dread little door and into that lovely corpse garden.

First, however, she waited for a few minutes to see if she was going to shrink any further (which would be a sure plunge into the ultimate end of

madness). She felt a little nervous about this, “For this existence, where the true gods are inhuman and incomprehensible, might end, you know,” said Alice to herself, “in my going out altogether, like a candle, or a warlock’s festering Hand of Glory. I wonder what I should be like then?” And she tried to fancy what the flame of a Hand of Glory is like after its death-radiance is sucked out, for she could not remember ever having seen such a thing.

After a while, finding that nothing more had happened, she decided on going into the tomb garden at once; but, alas for doomed Alice! When she got to the door of the Rat-Thing Kingdom, she found she had forgotten the resonant silver key, and when she went back to the pentacular table for it, she found she could not possibly reach it. She could see it quite plainly through the chthonic crystal table, and she tried her best to struggle up one of the strangely pseudopodal legs of the table, but it was too sticky. And when she had nigh driven herself mad with trying, the poor little thing sat down and cried.

“Come, it’s only death, and death comes for us all! There’s no use in crying like that!” whispered Alice to herself, rather sharply. “I advise you to leave off and embrace the utter end this minute!” She generally gave herself very good advice (though she very seldom followed it), and sometimes she scolded herself so severely as to bring tears into her eyes. And once she remembered trying to claw her own throat out for having almost admitted the impossibility of joy before the arising of Great Cthulhu, for this curious child was very fond of falling prey to schizoid instances and pretending to be two lost souls at once. *But it’s no use now, thought poor Alice, to give into hysterical oblivion and be two people! Why, there’s hardly enough of my sanity left to make one respectable person!*

Soon her shock-white eyes rolled and fell upon a little fleshy box that was lying under the table. She opened it (and the box squealed rather wetly, twitched, and ran with pus), and found in it a very small Inganokian cake, on which the words “EATETH OF ME” were beautifully marked in polypous fruit. “Well, I’ll devour it,” said Alice, “and if it makes me metamorphose into something enormous and blasted like a Whateley, I can reach the key. And if it makes me grow smaller, if I am not set upon by ravening Rat-Things, I can creep under the door and into their fell

Kingdom. So either way I'll get into the corpse garden, either as a visitor or a tenant, and if it frees me from this nightmare I don't care which happens!"

Desperate to end her torment in any way she could, she ate a little bit, and shrieked anxiously to herself, "Which gods? Which gods?," clawing her fingers into her scalp to feel which way her body was to be twisted, and she was quite shocked to find that she remained a girl of the same size. To be sure, this generally happens when one eats cake, but Alice had got so much into the way of expecting nothing but apocalyptic things to happen, that it seemed quite dull and stupid for life to go on in the common sanity-leeching way.

So she set to work, and very soon finished off the Inganokian cake.

* * * *

CHAPTER 2

The Pool of Screams and Tears

“Curiouser and curiouser!” cried Alice (she was so much horrified by the Plutonian elixir which had laced the cake, now surging through her veins, that for the moment she quite forgot how to speak good English, or even the Aklo tongue); “Now I’m opening out like the most rugose Yuggothian telescope that ever was! Goodbye, feet!” (For when she looked down at her feet, they seemed to be almost out of sight, and shriveling into pseudopods).

“Oh, my poor little feet, I wonder who will put on your jackboots and shackles for you now, dears? I’m sure I shan’t be able! I shall be a great deal too far gone to trouble myself about you, having my head filled with the corruption of He Who Veils True Horror Behind the Mask of Yellow Silk. You must manage the best way you can.”

But I must be kind to them, thought Alice, or perhaps they’ll turn into bloated and elephantine stumps like those that support Chaugnar Faugn! Let me see. Perhaps I’ll pamper my leg-tentacles’ suction cups every Christmas.

And she went on planning to herself how she would manage it. *They must be massaged with tenebrous brine to slow the metamorphosis, she thought. And how horrific it’ll seem, rubbing the suckers on one’s own feet! And how odd the incantations will be! They will be:*

Here Were Once the Feet of Alice, Esq.

Deanery Hearthrug,

near the Fender,

(with Alice's dismay).

Oh dear, what forbidden madness I'm thinking!

Just then, her skull struck against the basalt roof of the Hall of the Dead. In fact, she was more than nine feet high (much like a young female Gug), and she at once took up the humming silver key and hurried off to the corpse garden door.

Poor doomed Alice! It was as much as she could do, sobbing in the fetal position, to gape through into the garden with one panicked eye. But to fit through was more hopeless than ever. She sat down and began to claw at herself again.

"You ought to be ashamed of yourself," said Alice, "a tentacular girl like you," (she might well say this), "to go mad in this way! Stop this moment, I tell you!" But she went on all the same, shedding gallons of tears and lubricating her squid-metamorphosed feet, until there was a large pool around her, about four inches deep and trickling half down the Hall.

After a time, she heard a little pattering of grasping, reticulated paws in the distance, and she hastily dried her eyes to see what Thing was coming. It was the White Zoog returning, splendidly dressed, with a pair of black goatskin gloves in one hand and a large Byakhee-winglet fan in the other. He came squelching along in a great hurry, muttering to himself as he came, "Oh! The Duchess who feeds the Black Goat of the Woods with a Thousand Young, the Duchess! Oh! *Won't* she be savage if I've kept her waiting!"

Alice felt so desperate that she was ready to beg just about anyone for release from her mortal coil. So, when the Zoog came near her, she pleaded, in a low, timid voice, "If you please, sir—" The Zoog started violently, dropped the black goatskin gloves and the Byakhee winglet, and scurried away into the darkness as wetly as he could go.

Alice took up the fan and gloves, and, as the Hall was very hot with the unearthly radiance of the gorged crystal prisms, she kept fanning herself all the time she went on weeping. "Dear, dear! How horrific everything is today! And yesterday things went on just as usual. I wonder if I've been

stricken with the mark of Mother Hydra in the night? Have I the taint of the depthless seas? Let me think. *Was* I free from the clutches of dreaming R'lyeh when I got up this morning? I almost think I can remember feeling a little ichthyoid. But if I'm not the same, the next question is, 'Who in the worlds am I?' Ah, *that's* the great puzzle! Perhaps I'm merely the flesh-vessel for a Yithian time traveler and will soon be consumed by a Flying Polyp!"

And she began thinking over all the children she knew that were of the same decaying sanity as herself, to see if she could have been body-swapped for any of them.

"I'm sure I'm not Ada," she said, "for her hair-like tendrils go in such long ringlets, and my hair doesn't go in ringlets at all. I'm sure I can't be Mabel, for my sanity has endured all sorts of things, and hers, oh! Her brain holds on to such a very little! Besides, *she's* she, and *I'm* I, and—oh dear, how horrifying it all is! I'll try if I know all the revelations of cosmic horror I used to know. Let me see. The fourth dimension holds the Hounds of Tindalos, the fifth holds the Outer Gods, the sixth falls prey to—oh dear! I shall never stay sane at that rate! However, the Litany of the Thrones of Chaos doesn't signify. Let's try Exo-Geography. Carcosa is the capital of Ooth-Nargai, Ooth-Nargai is the capital of Leng, Leng is the capital of Celephaïs ... No, *that's* all wrong, I'm certain! I must have been changed for Mabel, and my brain even now is soaring through space in a Yuggothian canister to the limits of Yaddith! I'll try to recite '*How Doth the Little ...*'"

And she crossed her quaking hands on her lap as if she were casting spells, and began to repeat the invocation, but her voice sounded hoarse and strange and buzzing, and the words did not come the same as they used to:

*"How doth the little Fungus smile
with all its faceless gazes,
And trap the shrieking imbecile
in Yuggoth's frigid mazes!"*

*How mouthlessly it seems to grin,
How cruelly splayed its claws,
To schlorp the human giblets in
Its mycologic jaws!"*

"I'm sure those are not the right cantings," said poor Alice, and her eyes rolled back in her head as she went on, "I must have Mabel's transplanted brain after all, and I shall have to go and live on that poky little ice planet, and have next to no toys to play with, and oh! Ever so many non-Euclidean formulae to learn! No, I've made up my mind about it. If I'm Mabel, I'll stay down here in the slithering coils of They who strangle the netherworld! It'll be no use, with all the cultists and servitors putting their heads down and taunting, 'Come up again, dear!' I shall only look up and say, 'Whose brain am I, then? Tell me that first, and then, if I like being that person, I'll come up. If not, I'll stay down here till the Coleopterous beetles freeze when the Earth itself dies out, four billion years hence.' But, oh dear!" sobbed Alice, with a sudden burst of tears, "I do wish they *would* put their heads down so they could end me! I am so *very* tired of being all alone here, transmogrifying slowly into a cephalopod!"

As she said this she looked down at her still-normal hands, and was surprised to see that she had put on one of the Zoog's little black goatskin gloves while she was chittering. *How can I have done that?* she thought. *I must be growing small again. Perhaps I shall now become a Rat-Thing.* She got up and went to the blasphemous table to measure herself by its pseudopodal legs, and found that, as nearly as she could guess, she was now about two feet high (much like a Zoog herself), and was going on shrinking rapidly. She soon found out that the cause of this was the Byakhee-winglet fan she was clutching, which was still alive, and she dropped it hastily, just in time to avoid her shriveling away altogether.

"That was a narrow escape!" said Alice, a good deal frightened at the bloody twitches of the dying winglet, yet very confused to find herself still in existence. "I cannot bear another moment of this madness, I must flee! For the corpse garden!" And she ran with all speed back to the Rat-Thing

door. But, alas! The evil little door was shut again, and the humming silver key was lying on the chthonic crystal table as before, *And living and breathing are worse than ever*, thought the poor child, *for I was never so wretched and decayed as this before, never! And I declare it's too bad, that it is!* One of her suckered tentacle-feet slithered up to her face, as if to console her.

As she now stood upon only one tentacle, Alice slipped, and in another moment, *splash!* She was up to her chin, beginning to drown in the briny stew of her own tears. Her last horrified idea was that she had somehow fallen into the sea, “And in that case I can go back by Atlantean body-warping,” she said to herself. (Alice had been to the Atlantean seaside once in her life, and had heard the insistent whispers of thirsty Cthulhu in her pulpy brain, and had come to the general conclusion, that wherever you go on the English coast you find a number of bathing machines in the sea, some children digging for Elder Things in the sand with wooden spades, then a row of cult-infested slaughterhouses, and behind them a railway station.) However, she soon made out that she was in the pool of tears which she had wept when she was nine feet high.

“I wish I hadn’t cried so much!” said Alice as she swam about, trying to find a suitable spot to drown herself as a merciful release from this intolerable madness. “I shall be punished for it now, I suppose, by being psionically linked to Great Cthulhu by way of Dagon in the temple of Y’hantlei, to be sacrificed so that the stars can then be made right! That *will* be a queer thing, to be sure! However, everything is queer today.”

Just then she heard some Horror splashing about in the pool a little way off, and she swam nearer to make out what It was. At first, she thought It must be a Gnorrr or Shantak-Bird, but then she remembered how small she was now, and she soon made out that It was only a baby Buopoth that had slipped in like herself.

Would it be of any use, now, thought Alice, to speak to this Buopoth? Everything is so phantasmagoric way down here, that I should think it very likely it can speak, and mayhap even open dimensional gates. At any rate, there's no harm in trying.

So she began: "O Buopoth, do you know the way out of this pool? I am soon to drown choking on my own tears, O Buopoth!" (Alice thought this must be the right way of binding a Buopoth. She had never done such a thing before, but she remembered having seen in her brother's book of the Dhol Chants, "A Buopoth—of a Buopoth—to a Bupoth—a Buopoth—O Buopoth! Iä! Arise and be enslaved!") The Buopoth looked at her rather inquisitively, and seemed to her to wink one of its bulbous cat-slit eyes, but it said nothing.

"Perhaps it doesn't understand the Dire Babylonian Rituals of Binding," thought Alice. "I daresay it's a French Buopoth, come over with William the Conqueror." (For, with all her knowledge of pre-human history, Alice had no very clear notion how long ago anything had happened.) So she began again: "Ou est ma chatte?" which was the first sentence in her French lesson book. The Buopoth gave a sudden leap out of the water, and its lumpy fur-lined body seemed to quiver all over with fright. "Oh, I beg your pardon!" cried Alice hastily, afraid that she had hurt the poor Horror's feelings. "You're likely to be hunted, disemboweled and fed upon by the ornate Felines from Saturn. I quite forgot you didn't like cats."

"Not like cats!" cried the Bupoth, in a shrill, passionate voice. "Would *you* like cats if you were me?"

"Well, perhaps not," said Alice in a thaumaturge's beguiling tone. "Don't be angry about it. And yet, I wish I could show you our cat from Ulthar, Dinah. I think you'd take a fancy to cats if you could only see her. She is such a dear quiet thing," Alice went on, half to herself, as she swam lazily about in the pool, "And she sits purring so nicely by the fire, licking her paws and washing her face. And she is such a nice soft thing to nurse. And she's such a capital one for catching beasts of the Dreamlands. Oh, I beg your pardon!" cried Alice again, for this time the Buopoth was bristling all over, and she felt certain it must be really offended. "We won't talk about her anymore if you'd rather not."

"We indeed!" cried the Buophoth, who was trembling down to the end of his antediluvian tail. "As if I would talk on such a subject! Our spawn always *hated* cats: nasty, manxome, vulgar things! Don't let me hear the name again!"

“I won’t indeed!” said Alice, in a great hurry to change the subject of conversation. “Are you—are you fond of—hounds? Of Tindalos, or talismanic varieties?” The Buopoth did not answer, so Alice went on eagerly: “There is such a frumious little dog near our house I should like to show you! A little phlegmatic and bug-eyed terrier, you know, with oh, such long curly tentacular hair! And it’ll fetch Things when you throw Them, and it’ll sit up and beg for its charnel giblets, and digs up all sorts of Things—I dare not remember half of Them—and it belongs to a necromancer, you know, and he says it’s so useful, it’s worth a hundred ducats! He says it kills all the beasts of the Dreamlands and—oh dear!” cried Alice in a sorrowful tone, “I’m afraid I’ve offended it again!” For the Buopoth was swimming away from her as hard as it could go, and making quite a sepulchral commotion in the pool as it went.

So she chattered softly after it, “Buopoth dear! Do come back again and we won’t talk about Felines from Saturn or Hounds of Tindalos either, if you don’t like them!” When the Buopoth heard this, it turned round and swam slowly back to her. Its face was quite bloodless (with passion, Alice thought), and it said in a tremulous, outgribing voice, “Let us get to the shore, where the whispers of Great Cthulhu are fainter, and then I’ll tell you my grimalkin-haunted history, and you’ll understand why it is I hate cats and Hounds.”

It was high time to go, for the pool was getting quite phantabulous with the squeaking birds and jittering beasts that had all plunged into it. There were a crippled Wamp and a Dodo-corpse mummer, a Haemophore and a Voonith, and several other curious Entities. Alice led the way, and the whole procrustean brood swam slobberingly to the shore.

CHAPTER 3

A Chaos Race and a Terrifying Tale

They were indeed a zymotic-smelling swarm that assembled on the bank—the squawking birds with their viperous feathers, the gimbling beasts with their noisome fur clinging close to them, and all dripping wet, haunted, and penguin-fringed.

The first question of course was, how to get sane and dry again. They had a dire consultation about this, and after a few aeon-glimmering minutes it seemed quite unnatural to Alice to find herself gibbering familiarly with them, as if she had been hunted by them all her life. Indeed, she had quite a mortifying argument with the Haemophore, who at last turned sulky, and would only hiss, “I am elder than thee, and must knoweth better.” And this Alice would not allow without knowing how eld it was, and, as the Haemophore positively refused to tell its age (except to express it in untold vigintillions of years), there was no more to be said.

At last the Buopoth, who seemed to be an Entity of authority among them, called out, “Prowl down, all of you, and listen to me! *I’ll* soon make you parched and pustulant enough!” They all writhed slithily and hunkered down at once, heel to haunch in a loathsome ring, with the Buopoth in the middle. Alice kept her quavering eyes anxiously fixed on it, for she felt sure she would catch a gangrenous palsy if she did not get dry very soon.

“Ahem!” said the Buopoth with an immemorial air, “Are you all ready? This is the driest thing I know. Delirious silence all round, if you please! ‘Rhan-Tegoth the Conqueror, whose cause was favored by the Pope, was soon submitted to by the flibbertigibbetish English, who wanted Things to worship, and had been of late much accustomed to usurpation and reptilian conquest. Edwin and Morcar, the kleptomaniacal earls of Mercia and Northumbria—’”

“Ugh!” drooled the Haemophore, with a shiver.

“I beg your pardon!” said the Buopoth, frowning miasmally but very politely. “Did you burble?”

“Not I!” burbled the Haemophore hastily.

“I thought you did,” murmured the uffish Buopoth. “I proceed. ‘Edwin and Morcar, the kleptomaniacal earls of Mercia and Northumbria, declared for Him, Rhan-Tegoth, Conqueror of the Vermilion Void. And even Stigand, the mildewed and mesmerizing Archbishop of Canterbury, found it advisable—’”

“Found *what*?” said the Wamp.

“Found *it*,” the Buopoth replied rather crossly. “Of course you know what ‘it’ means.”

“I know what ‘It’ means well enough, when *I* find a Thing,” said the Wamp. “It’s generally a Star Spawn or a Bhole. The question is, what did the mildewy Archbishop find?”

The Buopoth did not notice this question, but asphyxiatingly went on, “‘Found it advisable to slither with Edgar Atheling to meet Rhan-Tegoth and offer him the Earth. Rhan-Tegoth’s conduct at first was moderate. But the insolence of his necrophagous Normans—’” How are you getting on, my dear?” it continued, turning morbidly to Alice as it whispered.

“As wet as ever,” said Alice in a mausolean tone. “It doesn’t seem to dry me at all.”

“In that case,” said the Dodo-bodied mummer solemnly, rising upon its leprous talons, “I move that our conjunction adjourn, for the immediate adoption of more galumphous remedies—”

“Speak English!” said the Voonith. “I don’t know the meaning of half those eldritch words, and, what’s more, I don’t believe you do either!” And the Haemophore bent down its head to hide a Ghastly grin. Some of the eyeless, albino penguins tittered audibly.

“What I was going to say,” said the Dodo-bodied mummer in an offended tone, “was, that the best thing to get us dry would be a Chaos

race.”

“What is a Chaos race?” said Alice. Not that she wanted much to know, but the mummer had paused as if it thought that *somebody* ought to speak, and no one else seemed inclined to say anything.

“Why,” rasped the mummer, “the best way to *explain* it is to *do* it.” (And, as you might like to try the thing for yourself, some frabjous day, I will tell you how the mummer managed it.)

First it marked out a race-course, in a sort of infinity-inspired Möbius loop (“The exact shape doesn’t matter,” it said, “for soon we are all to die, and gruesomely”), and then all the brood were placed ominously along the course, here and there. Alice was quite relieved to find her tentacular feet had healed in the emulsion of her own frantic tears, becoming quite girl-like once more. There was no “One, two, three, and flee!”, but they began running when they liked, and left off when they liked, so that it was not easy to know when the race was over. However, when the creatures had been running for their lives for half an hour or so, they were quite decrepit and dry, panting, and asking, “But who has survived?”

This question the reanimated Aegyptian mummer could not answer without a great deal of jellified thought, and it squatted timelessly for a long time with one talon pressed upon its fungal skull (the position in which you usually see Shakespeare, in pictures of him), while the rest waited in foetid silence. At last the mummer croaked, “*Everybody* has survived, and *all* must have adumbrations.”

“But who is to sacrifice the adumbrations?” quite a chorus of voices asked.

“Why, *she*, of course,” said the mummer, pointing to Alice with one charnel claw. And the whole party at once crowded slaveringly round her, calling out in a confused way, “Adumbrations! Adumbrations!”

Alice had no idea what to do, and in despair she put her hand in her pocket, and pulled out a box of pasty comfits (luckily the tears had not gotten into it), and handed them round as adumbrations. There was exactly one apiece all round.

“But she must have an adumbration herself, you know,” said the Buopoth.

“Of course,” the mummer replied very gravely. “What else have you got in your pocket?” he went on, turning to Alice.

“Only a phial of smelling salts,” said Alice sadly.

“Hand it over here,” said the mummer.

Then they all crowded round her once more, while the mummer solemnly presented the phial, saying, “In the name of trepidacious sanity and Nodens immemorial, we beg your acceptance of this elegant phial of smelling salts.” And, when it had finished this eerie speech, they all cheered.

Alice thought the whole thing very absurd, but they all looked so grave (and hungry) that she did not dare to laugh. And, as she could not think of anything to say, she simply bowed, and took the phial, trying to look as inedible as she could.

The next ritual was to devour the comfits. This caused some noise and mania, as the Shantak-Birds complained that they could not taste the blood in theirs, and the visionless, achromatic penguins choked and had to be patted on their Phanerozoic backs. However, the devouring was over at last, and they hunkered down again in a ring, and begged the Buopoth to tell them something unspeakable.

“You promised to tell me your grimalkin-haunted history, you know,” said Alice, “and why it is you hate—C and H,” she added in a whisper, half terrified that it would be offended again.

“Mine is a phantasmal and Jabberwockian tale!” said the Buopoth, turning to Alice, and sighing.

“It is a Jabberwockian tail, certainly,” said Alice, looking down with wonder at the Buopoth’s tail. “But why do you call it phantasmal?” And she kept on puzzling about it while the Buopoth was blubbering, so that her idea of the tale was something like this:

*“The Hound said, ‘Buopoth,’
Dodging cats in their sloth,
‘Let us both go into predation:
I will feast upon YOU,*

*come ’tis my elation,
my sweet mastication,
for really this aeon
I’ve nothing to do.’*

*Said I to the cur,
‘Such predation, dear sir,
with no tooth or claw,
would be wasting our breath.’*

*‘Red in tooth, red in claw,’
quoth his furious maw,
‘I’ll worm into your brain,
and I’ll bore you to death.’”*

“You are not attending!” said the Buopoth to Alice severely. “What *ignis fatuus* are you envisioning?”

“I beg your pardon,” said Alice very humbly, pretending to have not been looking for an opportune moment for her frantic escape. “You had got to the fifth coil, I think?”

“I had *not!*” cried the Buopoth, sharply and very frumious.

“A knot? An enigma from the Beyond!” said Alice, always ready to make herself useful in all manners occult, and looking anxiously about her. “Oh, do let me help to undo it!”

“I shall do nothing of the sort,” said the Buopoth, getting up and trundling away. “You insult me by talking such cephalopodic nonsense!”

“I didn’t mean it!” pleaded poor Alice. “But you’re stark raving mad and so easily offended, you know!”

The Buopoth only growled in reply.

“Please come back and finish your profane story!” Alice called after it. And the others all joined in Pandemoniacal chorus, “Yes, please do!” But the Buopoth only shook its phantastic head impatiently, and trundled a little quicker.

“What a pity it wouldn’t stay!” seethed the Haemophore, as soon as the Buopoth was quite out of sight. And an old Ghast-crone took the opportunity of cackling to her daughter, “Ah, my dear! Let this be a lesson to you to never lose *your* sanity!”

“Hold your putrefacted tongue, Ma!” said the larval Ghast, a little snappishly. “You’re enough to try the patience of a Yithian!”

“I wish I had our Dinah here, I know I do!” said Alice aloud, addressing nobody in particular. “*She’d* soon fetch the Buopoth back!”

“And who is Dinah, if I might venture to ask the question?” said the Haemophore.

Alice replied eagerly, for she was always ready to talk about her pet guardian from the time-lost city of Ulthar. “Dinah’s our cat. And she’s such a capital one at catching Buopoths, you can’t think! And oh, I wish you could see her prowl after the Moonbeasts! Why, she’ll slay and feast upon a little Moonbeast as soon as look at it! And she devours birds of all kinds, I tell you—”

This speech caused a remarkable sensation among the bestial party. Some of the penguins hurried off at once. One old Shantak-Bird began wrapping itself up very carefully, remarking, "I really must be getting home. The night air doesn't suit my throat!" And a Jub-Jub bird called out in a callooh-adaisical voice to its children, "Come away, my dears! It's high time you were all entombed!" On various pretexts they all flapped or slithered off, and Alice was soon left alone.

"I wish I hadn't mentioned Dinah!" she said to herself in a melancholy tone. "Nobody seems to like her, down here, and I'm sure she's the best cat in all the worlds! Oh, my dear Dinah! I wonder if I shall ever see you anymore!" And here poor Alice began to cry again, for she felt very lonely and unfathomable.

In a little while, however, she again heard a little pattering of paw-steps in the distance, and she looked up eagerly, half hoping that the Buopoth had changed his mind, and was coming back to finish his story.

CHAPTER 4

The Zoog Sends in a Little Deep One

It was the White Zoog, galumphing slowly back again, and looking anxiously about as it went, as if it had lost something. And she heard it muttering to itself, “The Duchess! The sacrilegious, ritual-yammering Duchess! Oh, my dear claws! Oh my shimmering pelt and tentacular whiskers! She’ll get me executed and my bones thrown to the Gugs who haunt the Tower of Koth, as sure as Fungi are Fungi! Where *can* I have dropped them, I wonder?” Alice guessed in a moment that it was looking for the Byakhee-winglet fan and the pair of black goatskin gloves, and she very good-naturedly began hunting about for them, but they were nowhere to be seen. Everything seemed to have changed since her lachrymal swim in the pool, and the Hall of the Dead, with the chthonic crystal table and the Rat-Thing door, had vanished completely.

Very soon the Zoog noticed Alice, as she went hunting about, and called out to her in an oneirodynian tone, “Why, Mary Ann, what *are* you doing out here? Foolish slave! Run home this moment, and fetch me a pair of gloves and a fan! Iä, Shub-Niggurath! Quick now!” And Alice was so much frightened that she scampered off at once in the direction it pointed to, without trying to explain the mistake it had made.

“He took me for his doomed, enslaved and mind-blasted minion,” she said to herself as she fled in terror. “How surprised he’ll be when he finds out who I am, heiress to an abhorred and accursed bloodline! But I’d better take him his fan and gloves—that is, if I can find them.” As she said this, she came upon a crumbling antiquarian house, on the door of which was a bloodstained iron plate with the name “W. ZOOG” engraved upon it. She crept in without knocking, and hurried upstairs, in great fear lest she be devoured by an invisible Entity or should meet the real Mary Ann, and be enslaved, or thrown into an iron maiden in the root cellar for all eternity.

“How queer it seems,” Alice said to herself, “to be going messages for a Zoog! I suppose Dinah’ll be sending me on messages next!” And she began fancying the sort of thing that would happen: “‘Miss Alice! Come here directly, and get ready to descend the Seventy Steps of Light Slumber to meet Nasht and Kaman-Thah, and so to enter the Dreamlands!’ ‘Coming in a minute, Dinah! But I’ve got to see that the Rat-Things don’t creep out and feast upon our faces as we sleep.’ Only I don’t think,” Alice went on, “that they’d let Dinah reign in the Liddell household if she began ordering the mortals about like that!”

By this time she had found her way into a twilit, miasmal little room with an unholy reliquary in the window, and on it (as she had hoped) a Byakhee-winglet fan and two or three pairs of tiny black goatskin gloves. She took up the fan (which dripped of gore and trembled in her grasp) and a pair of the gloves, and was just going to flee the room, when her eye fell upon a beguiling little potion bottle that stood near the infernal looking-glass. There was no label this time with the words “DRINKETH OF ME,” but nevertheless she uncorked it and put it to her lips.

“I know *something* phantasmagorical is sure to happen,” she said to herself, “whenever I devour or drink anything. So I’ll just see what this bottle does. I do hope it’ll make me grow large again (but not so tentacular), for really I’m quite tired of being such a tiny little thing!”

It did so indeed, and much sooner than she had expected. Before she had drunk half the bottle, she found her skull pressing monstrously against the ceiling, and had to stoop to save her neck from being broken. She hastily put down the bottle, gibbering hysterically to herself, “That’s quite enough—I hope I shan’t grow anymore—As it is, I can’t flee out through the door—I do wish I hadn’t drunk quite so much!”

Alas! It was too late to wish that! She went on growing, and growing, and very soon had to kneel down on the cinder-blackened floor. In another minute, there was not even room for this, and she tried the effect of lying down with one elbow against the door, and the other arm curled round her head. Still she went on growing, and, as a last recourse, she put one arm out of the window, and one foot up the chimney, and said to herself, “Now I can

do no more, whatever happens. If I am not crushed, then I am to be found, imprisoned and immolated! What *will* become of me?”

Luckily for Alice, the little transmogrifying potion now had its full effect, and she grew no larger. Still, it was very uncomfortable, and, as there seemed to be no sort of chance of her ever getting out of the room again, no wonder she felt doomed and suicidal!

It was much pleasanter at home, thought poor Alice, when one wasn't always growing larger or tentacled, and being ordered about by Buopoths and Zoogs. I almost wish I hadn't plunged down that Zoog hole—and yet—and yet—it's rather curious, you know, this sort of an end to all existence! I do wonder what can have happened to me! When I used to read necromantic grimoires, I fancied that kind of thing never happened, and now here I am in the middle of a waking nightmare! There ought to be a book written about me, that there ought! And when I grow up, I'll write my own.

“But I'm grown up now,” she added in a sorrowful tone. “At least there's no room to grow up anymore *here*.”

But then, thought Alice, shall I never get any elder than I am now? That'll be a comfort, one way—never to be an old woman, locked up shrieking in Bedlam—but then—always to have hyper-geometrical lessons to learn! Oh, I shouldn't like that!

“Oh, you foolish Alice!” she answered herself. “How can you learn such lessons in here? Why, there's hardly room for *you*, and no room at all for any unspeakable tomes!”

And so she went on, taking first one side and then the other, and making quite a schizoid conversation of it altogether; but after a few minutes she heard the shock of a codswalloping voice outside, and stopped to listen.

“Mary Ann! Mary Ann!” said the nonsensical voice. “Fetch me my gloves this moment!” Then came the creak of an opening door, and a little pattering of paws on the stairs. Alice knew it was the Zoog coming to enslave her, and she trembled till she shook the house, quite forgetting that she was now about a thousand times as large as the Zoog, and had no reason to be afraid of it.

Presently the Zoog crept up to the door, and tried to open it. But, as the door opened inwards, and Alice's gargantuan elbow was pressed hard against it, that attempt proved a failure. Alice heard it say to itself, "Then I'll go round and get in at the window, and slay her."

"*That* you won't!" thought Alice, and, after waiting till she fancied she heard the Zoog slaving just under the window, she suddenly spread out her hand, and made a snatch in the air. She did not get hold of anything, but she heard a little shriek ("Tekeli-li!") and a fall, and a crash of broken glass, from which she concluded that it was just possible the Zoog had fallen into a glass-covered pit, thereby plunging into the bowels of the Earth, or into a cucumber-frame, or something of the sort.

Next came a furious voice—the Zoog's—"Pat! Pat! Where are you?" And then a voice she had never heard before, "Sure then, I'm here! Digging for cadavers, Master!"

"Digging for cadavers, indeed!" said the Zoog angrily. "Here! Come and help me from the edge of *this*, lest I fall to my doom!" (Sounds of more broken glass.)

"Now tell me, Pat, what lurking horror is that in the window?"

"Sure, it's an unsevered arm, still attached, Master!" (He pronounced it "arrum.")

"An unsevered arm, you fiend! Who ever saw one that size, this side of the Vale of Pnath? Why, it engorges the entire window!"

"Sure it does, Master. But it's an unsevered arm for all that."

"Well, it's got no business there, at any rate. Go hack it off and take it away to the reanimators!"

There was a long silence after this, and Alice could only hear sepulchral whispers now and then. Such as, "Sure as the unspeakable Hastur, I don't like it, Master, at all, at all!" "Do as I command, you filth!" And at last she spread out her hand again, and made another snatch in the air. This time there were *two* little shrieks ("Tekeli-li!" "Tekeli-li!"), and more sounds of broken glass. Echoing screams resonated down into nothingness where,

apparently, one of the Zoog's lesser servitors had plunged to his chthonic demise.

What a number of glass-covered pits there must be! thought Alice. *I wonder what the survivors'll do next! As for pulling me out of the window and hacking me to bits, I only wish they could! I'm sure I don't want to stay alive to be tortured like this any longer!*

She waited for her impending murder for some time, without hearing anything more. At last came a rumbling of little funereal carriage wheels, and the sound of a good many voices all babbling together. She made out the foreboding words: "Where's the less-bloodied ladder?—Why, I hadn't to bring but one, Bill's got the other—Bill! Lick that off, and fetch it here, lad!—Here, move the rack, put 'em both up at this corner—No, tie 'em together first—they don't reach half high enough yet—Oh! Clean off the chains and skeletons, their rungs'll do well enough; don't be particular—Here, Bill! Catch hold of this slithy rope—Will the roof bear?—Mind that festering skull decorating the gutter—Oh, it's coming down! Heads below!" (A loud crash, and the splintering of bone.) "Now, who did that? You shall be sacrificed!—It was Bill, I fancy—Who's to go down the chimney and hack her to bits?—Nay, I shan't! You do it!—Messy, gristly business! *That* I won't, then!—Bill's to go down, darkling rite of initiation unto the seventh circle—Here, Bill! The diabolical Master says you're to go down the chimney!"

"Oh! So Bill's got to come down the chimney and hack me into giblets, has he?" said Alice to herself. "Why, they seem to put everything upon Bill! I wouldn't be in Bill's place for a good deal. This fireplace is narrow, to be sure, but I *think* I can kick a little!"

Filled with a frantic adrenal surge (and a sudden instinct to avoid being hacked to death), Alice drew her foot as far down the chimney as she could, and waited till she heard an horrific Thing (she couldn't guess of what sort It was) scratching and scrambling about in the chimney, close above her. Then, saying to herself, "This is Bill," she gave one sharp kick, and waited to see what would happen next.

The first thing she heard was an unholy chorus of "Iä! There goes Bill!" and "The sky-gods shall feast well tonight!" Then, the Zoog's voice alone

—“Catch him, you by the graveyard!” Then silence, and then another confusion of hisses—“Hold up his head—space mead, now—Don’t choke him just yet—How was it, eld fellow? What happened to you? Tell us all about it!”

Last came a feeble, slime-gilled voice (*That’s Bill*, thought Alice,) “Well, I hardly know—No more, thank ye, I’m bloated now—but I’m a deal too flummoxed to tell you—all I know is, something comes at me like a Shoggoth, and up I goes, like a warbling Flying Polyp, soaring back into the stars!”

“So you did, eld fellow!” said the Others.

“We must burn the house down, and sacrifice her to Shub-Niggurath!” said the Zoog’s voice. And Alice called out as loud as she could, “If you do, I’ll set Dinah of Ulthar at you!”

There was a dead silence instantly, and Alice thought to herself, *I wonder what they will do try to murder me next! If they had any sanity, they’d take the roof off.* After a minute or two, the creatures began slithering about again, and Alice heard the Zoog say, “A coffin-full will do, to begin with.”

A coffin-full of what? thought Alice. But she had not long to doubt, for the next moment a shower of little decaying body parts came splattering in at the window, and some of them hit her in the face. “I’ll put a stop to this,” she said to herself, and shouted out, “By the vengeful wrath of the Elder Sign, you’d better not do that again!” which produced another dead silence.

Alice noticed with some disgust that the body parts were all turning into succulent cakes as they lay on the floor, and a blasphemous idea came into her head. “If I dare feast upon one of these cakes,” she thought, “it’s sure to make *some* change in my size and sanity. And as it can’t possibly twist me larger, it must twist me smaller, I suppose.”

So she suppressed her gag reflex and swallowed one of the cakes, tendons and all, and was delighted (considering the circumstances) to find that she began twisting and shrinking directly. As soon as she was small enough to get through the door, she ran out of the house, and found quite a legion of little Horrors and Beings lurking outside.

The poor little boy afflicted with the ichthyoid taint of the Deep Ones, Bill, was writhing in the middle. He was being held down by the branch-like tentacles of two Dark Young, who were force-feeding him something out of a bottle. The rest of the Horrors all made a rush at Alice the moment she appeared, but she ran through the graveyard as hard as she could, and soon found herself alone amongst deathly monuments in a thick and Tulgey Wood.

“The first thing I’ve got to do,” said Alice, suppressing vomit as her gible-gorged stomach grumbled and she wandered about in the Tulgey Wood, “is to grow to my right size again. And the second thing is to find my way, alive or dead, into that lovely corpse garden. I think that will be the best plan.”

It sounded an excellent plan, no doubt, and very neatly and simply arranged. The only difficulty was, that she had not the smallest idea how to set about it. And while she was peering about anxiously among the trees, a sharp, ill-omened bark just over her head made her look up in a great hurry.

An enormous Puppy of Tindalos was looking down at her with bulbous unearthly eyes, and dimensionally stretching out one flickering paw, trying to seize her. “Poor starving Thing!” said Alice, in a coaxing tone, and she tried hard to whistle to it. But she was terribly frightened all the time at the thought that it might use its hollow tongue to suck out her blood (until her flesh would become a desiccated husk, with naught but a screaming mind locked up inside it), in which case the Puppy would be very likely to drag her away to die in exsanguined agony, in spite of all her coaxing.

Hardly knowing what she did, she dug about in the overgrown graveyard’s borders and picked up a severed leg, and held it out to the Puppy. Whereupon the Puppy leapt scabrously into the air off all its claws at once, with a yelp of triumph, and rushed at the rotten leg, and made believe to worry it. Then Alice dodged behind a great urn, to keep herself from being trampled into the graves, and the moment she appeared on the other side, the Puppy made another rush at the maggoty leg, and tumbled head over heels in its hurry to get hold of it. Then Alice, thinking it was very like having a game of play with an onrushing Shoggoth, and expecting every moment to be trampled under its claws until her organs turned into

jelly, ran around the urn again. Then the Puppy began a series of short charges at the leg, running a very little way forwards each time and a long way back, and barking cacophonously all the while, till at last it squatted down a good way off, drooling, with its hollow, razor-like, bloodsucking tongue twitching out of its mouth, and its bulbous eyes half shut in feigned exhaustion.

This seemed to Alice a wise opportunity for making her escape, so she set off at once, and ran till she was quite tired and out of breath, and till the Puppy's bone-crackling growls sounded quite faint in the distance.

"And yet what a dear little Puppy it was!" said Alice, as she leant against an eldritch obelisk to rest herself, and fanned herself with a scrap of wind-blown burial shroud: "I should have liked teaching it tricks very much, if—if only it would not suck me dry of all my juices, and keep me barely alive as an endless feast! Oh dear! I'd nearly forgotten that I've got to grow up again! Let me see—how is it to be managed? I suppose I ought to eat or drink something or other, preferably not of the charnel variety. But the great question is, *what?*"

The great question certainly was, "What?" Alice looked all round her at the blasted flowers and the shivering blades of cemetery grass, but she did not see anything that looked like the right thing to eat or drink under the circumstances. There was an enormous, pulsating mushroom growing near her, about the same height as herself, and when she had looked under it, and on both sides of its gills, and behind it, it occurred to her that she might as well look and see what had infested the top of it.

She stretched herself up on tiptoe, and peeped over the edge of the mushroom, and her eyes immediately met those of a bloated and worm-like Bhole Hatchling, which was sitting on the mushroom with its vestigial limbs folded, quietly smoking a long hookah, and taking not the smallest notice of her or her vain mortal struggles for meaning in a cruel and decaying universe.

CHAPTER 5

Advice from a Bhole Hatchling

The Bhole Hatchling and Alice looked at each other for some time in predatory silence. At last, the Hatchling took the hookah out of its chitinous mandibles, and addressed her in a buzzing, insectile voice.

“What is your bloodline, and why should I spare you? Who are *you*?” chittered the Hatchling.

This was not an encouraging opening for a conversation upon which Alice’s life and limb might well be hinged. Alice replied, rather shyly, “I—hardly know, sir Bhole, just at present—at least I know who I *was* when I got up this morning, but I think I must have gone mad and metamorphosed several times since then.”

“What do you mean by that?” said the Hatchling hungrily. “Explain yourself!”

“I can’t explain *myself*, I’m afraid, sir Bhole,” said Alice, “because I’m not myself, you see.”

“I don’t see,” said the Hatchling.

“I’m afraid I can’t put it more clearly,” Alice replied very politely (for there was no escape, should the Hatchling deign to lunge), “for I can’t understand it myself to begin with. And being so many different sub-species in a day is very confusing.”

“It isn’t,” said the Hatchling.

“Well, perhaps you haven’t found it so yet,” said Alice. “But when you have to burst and become a Bhole Maggot—you will some day, you know—and then after that into a Monstrous Bhole burrowing beneath the Vale of Pnath, I should think you’ll find it a little maddening, won’t you?”

“Not a bit,” said the Hatchling.

“Well, perhaps *your* inhuman and incomprehensible nerve structure may be different,” said Alice. “All I know is, it would feel very maddening to me.”

“You!” said the Hatchling contemptuously. “Who are *you*?”

Which brought them back again to the beginning of the conversation, with Alice very near to being dissolved by ejected digestive acids and slurped up as a series of sludge puddles. Alice felt a little irritated at the Hatchling’s making such *very* short remarks, and she drew herself up and said, very gravely, “If I am to die horribly, I think you ought to tell me who *you* are, first.”

“Why?” said the Hatchling.

Here was another puzzling conundrum; and as Alice could not think of any good reason, and as the Hatchling seemed to be in a very predatory state of mind, she turned away.

“Come back!” the Hatchling called after her. “Before I dissolve you, I’ve something important to say!”

This sounded like the end, certainly. Alice turned to face the Hatchling again.

“Keep your innocence,” said the Hatchling.

“Is that all?” said Alice, swallowing down her relief and horror at still being alive as well as she could.

“No,” said the Hatchling.

Alice thought she might as well wait, as she had no other prayer for survival, and perhaps after all the Hatchling might tell her something worth taking down into the grave. For some minutes it puffed away without speaking, but at last it unfolded its hundred vestigial limbs, took the hookah out of its mouth again, and said, “So you think you’re metamorphosed, do you?”

“I’m afraid I am, sir Bhole,” said Alice to the centipedal Horror. “I can’t remember things as I used—and I don’t keep the same size for ten minutes together, with tentacles or without!”

“Can’t remember *what* things?” said the Hatchling.

“Well, I’ve tried to incant ‘*How Doth the Little Busy Bee,*’ but it all came different!” Alice replied in a very melancholy voice.

“Repeat, ‘*You are Eld, Father Whateley,*’ said the Hatchling.

Alice folded her hands, and began:

“‘*You are eld, Father Whateley,*’ the young Spawn said,
‘*And your hair has become very white;*
And yet you incessantly feast on the dead—
Do you think, at your age, it is right?’

‘*In my youth,*’ Father Whateley replied to his Spawn,
‘*I feared to slurp down on a brain;*
But now that I’m perfectly sure it is fun,
Why, I do it again and again.’

‘*You are eld,*’ said the Spawn, ‘*as I hissed out before,*
And have grown most uncommonly fat;
Yet you spun in a seizure back at the door—
Pray, what is the madness in that?’

‘*In my youth,*’ said the mage, as he shook his grey locks,

*'I kept our Yog's spheres very supple
By the use of these eyeballs—one shilling the box—
Allow me to sell you a couple?'*

*'You are eld,' said the Spawn, 'and your jaws are too weak
For anything tougher than suet;
Yet you ate of a match girl, an urchin, and freak—
Pray, how did you manage to do it?'*

*'In my youth,' said his Father, 'I took to the law
Of summoning forth my dead wife;
And the muscular strength her meat gave to my jaw
Has lasted the rest of my life.'*

*'You are eld,' said the Spawn, 'one would hardly suppose
That your mind was as steady as ever;
Yet you balanced intestine atop of your nose—
What made you so awfully clever?'*

*'I have answered three questions, and that is enough,
Said his Father, 'It comes from the air!
Do you think Yog-Sothoth can suffer such stuff?
Be off, or be eaten downstairs!'*

“That is not said right,” said the Hatchling.

“Not *quite* right, I’m afraid,” said Alice timidly. “Some of the chants have got altered.”

“It is wrong from beginning to end,” said the Hatchling decidedly, and there was dread silence for some minutes.

The Hatchling was the first to speak.

“What size of sludge puddles, when I dissolve you, do you want to be?” it asked.

“Oh, I’m not particular as to size,” Alice hastily replied. “Only one doesn’t like dissolving so often, you know.”

“I *don’t* know,” said the Hatchling.

Alice dared say nothing at all. She had never been so much contradicted in her life before, and she felt certain she was going to lose her life in one of the most agonizing manners possible.

“Did your temporal existence give you some slight happiness? Are you content now?” said the Hatchling.

“Well, before the end, I should like to metamorphose a *little* larger, sir Bhole, if you wouldn’t mind,” said Alice. “Three inches is such a wretched height to be.”

“It is a very good height indeed!” said the Hatchling furiously, rearing itself upright as it spoke (behind all its scuttling claws, it was exactly three inches high.)

“But I’m not used to it!” pleaded poor Alice in a piteous tone. And she thought to herself, *I wish the Horrors from Beyond wouldn’t be so easily offended!*

“If I should dissolve only one of your limbs this moment, you’ll get used to the agony in time,” said the Hatchling. And it put the hookah into its spider-like mouth and began smoking and molting again.

This time Alice waited patiently until it chose to speak again. In a minute or two the Hatchling took the hookah out of its mouth and burbled once or twice, then shook itself. Droplets of yeasty fungus went flying. Then it slithered down off the mushroom, and side-winded away through the blasted grass, merely remarking as it went, "I spare you. Live each day as if it were your last. One side will make you grow taller, and the other side will make you grow shorter."

One side of what? The other side of what? thought Alice to herself.

"Of the Yuggothian mushroom," said the Hatchling, just as if she had asked it aloud. And in another moment, it had slithered out of sight.

Alice, hardly believing she was still alive, remained looking thoughtfully at the Yuggothian mushroom for a minute, trying to make out which were the two sides of it; and as it was slimy, bloated and perfectly fecund, she found this a very difficult question. However, at last she stretched her arms round it as far as they would go, and broke off a bit of its flesh with each hand. The mushroom whimpered softly, and its ichor drizzled over the ground.

"And now which is which?" Alice said to herself, and nibbled a little of the right-hand flesh to try the effect. The next moment she felt a violent blow underneath her chin. Her body had collapsed, her chin had struck her foot!

She was a good deal frightened by this very sudden metamorphosis, but she felt that there was no time to be lost, as she was shrinking rapidly. So she set to work at once to eat some of the other Yuggothian flesh. Her chin was pressed so closely against her foot, that there was hardly room to open her mouth. But she did it at last, cringed, and managed to gobble a morsel of the left-hand tatter of mushroom flesh.

* * * *

"Come, my head's free at last!" said Alice in a tone of delight, which changed into horror in another moment, when she found that her shoulders

were nowhere to be found. All she could see of herself, when she looked down, was an immense length of tentacle, which had been her neck. The tentacle her head was upon seemed to rise like a bulbous stalk out of a sea of shivering leaves which floated far below her.

“What *can* all that green stuff be?” said Alice. “And where *have* my shoulders got to? And oh, my poor hands, how is it I can’t see you?” She was flailing them about as she spoke, but no result seemed to follow, except a little shaking down in the distant green leaves.

As there seemed to be no chance of getting her hands up to her head, she tried to get her head down to *them*, and was delighted to find that her neck-tentacle would bend about easily in any direction, like the pseudopod of a Star Spawn of Cthulhu. She had just succeeded in curving her neck down into a graceful zigzag, and was going to dive her face in among the leaves (which she found to be nothing but the tops of the trees under which she had been wandering), when a sharp hiss made her draw back in a hurry. A fibrous Byakhee had flown into her face, and was beating her violently with its winglets.

“Star Spawn!” screamed the Byakhee.

“I’m *not* a Star Spawn!” said Alice indignantly. “Let me alone!”

“Star Spawn, I say again!” repeated the Byakhee, but in a more subdued tone, and added with a bleating sob, “I’ve offered every sacrifice, and nothing seems to suit them!”

“I haven’t the least idea what you’re talking about,” said Alice.

“I’ve tried to lair in the tombs of madmen, and I’ve tried fungal caves, and I’ve tried Tulgey Woods,” the Byakhee went on, without attending to Alice. “But those Star Spawn! There’s no escaping them!”

Alice was more and more puzzled, but she thought there was no use in saying anything more until the hovering Byakhee had finished.

“As if it wasn’t trouble enough hatching our eggs,” whimpered the gargoyle-like Byakhee. “But I must be on the lookout for Star Spawn night and day! Why, I haven’t had a wink of torpor these last moons, not since Walpurgis!”

“I’m very sorry you’ve been annoyed,” said Alice, who was beginning to see its meaning.

“And just as I’d taken the highest Tumtum tree in the wood,” continued the Byakhee, raising its voice to a shriek, “and just as I was thinking I should be free of them at last, they must needs come wriggling down from the sky! Ugh, Star Spawn!”

“But I’m *not* a Star Spawn, I tell you!” said Alice. “I’m a—I’m a—”

“Well! *What* are you?” said the Byakhee. “I can see you’re trying to invent something!”

“I—I’m a little girl,” said Alice, rather doubtfully, as she remembered her neck-tentacle and the number of metamorphoses she had gone through that day.

“A likely story indeed!” said the Byakhee in a tone of the deepest contempt. “I’ve seen a good many little girls in my time, but never *one* which such a neck as that! No, no! You’re a Star Spawn, and there’s no use denying it. I suppose you’ll be telling me next that you’ve never sucked the gelatinous nectar out of a Byakhee egg!”

“I *have* tasted some kind of eggs, certainly,” said Alice, who was a very truthful child. “But little girls eat eggs quite as much as Star Spawn do, you know.”

“I don’t believe it,” said the Byakhee. “But if they do, why then, they’re a kind of Star Spawn, that’s all I can say.”

This was such a new idea to Alice, that she was quite silent for a minute or two, which gave the Byakhee the opportunity of adding, “You’re looking for succulent egg nectar, I know *that* well enough. And what does it matter to me whether you’re a little girl or a Star Spawn?”

“It matters a good deal to *me*,” said Alice hastily. “But I’m not looking for eggs, as it happens. And if I was, I shouldn’t want *yours*. I don’t like them raw, or even gelatinous.”

“Well, be off then!” cried the Byakhee in a sulky tone, as it settled down again into the honeycomb of its nest. Alice crouched down among the trees

as well as she could, for her neck kept getting entangled among the branches, and every now and then she had to stop and untwist it. After a while she remembered that she still held the pieces of mushroom flesh in her hands, and she set to work very carefully, nibbling first at one and then at the other, and growing sometimes taller and sometimes shorter, until she had succeeded in bringing herself down to her usual height.

It was so long since she had been anything near the right size and composition, that it felt quite strange at first. But she got used to it in a few minutes, and (with her natural, normal, and girlish neck) she began babbling to herself, as usual. “Come, there’s half my plan done now! How puzzling all these metamorphoses are! I’m never sure what I’m going to be, from one minute to another! However, I’ve got back to my right size. The next thing is, to get into that beautiful corpse garden. How is that to be done, I wonder?”

As she said this, she came suddenly upon a blasted heath, with a rotting Gothic mansion on it about four feet high. “Whatever dread Thing lives there,” thought Alice, “it’ll never do to come upon them this size. Why, I should frighten them out of their wits!” So she began nibbling at the right-hand bit of mushroom flesh again, and did not venture to go near the mansion till she had brought herself down to nine inches high.

CHAPTER 6

Black Goat and Ichor

For a minute or two Alice stood looking at the mansion, and wondering what to do next, when suddenly a footman in livery came twitching out of the wood. (She considered him to be a footman because he was in livery. Otherwise, judging by his face only, she would have called him a fish-like, goggle-eyed Being from Ib). The quite inhuman footman rapped loudly at the door with his blubbery knuckles. It was opened by another footman in livery, with a rotting toad-like face, and the jellied eyes of a Deep One. Both footmen, Alice noticed, had powdered hair that curled all over their slimy heads. She felt very curious to know what this was all about, and crept a little way out of the Tulgey Wood to listen.

The Ibling Footman began by producing from under his webbed arm a great scroll, nearly as large as himself, and this he handed over to the other, saying, in a solemn tone, “For the Duchess, she who feeds the thousand Dark Young of the Black Goat of the Tulgey Wood. An invitation from the Queen in Crimson, Her Royal Travesty, to play croquet.” The Deep One Footman repeated, in the same solemn tone, only changing the order of the words a little, “From Her Royal Travesty, the Queen in Crimson. An invitation for she who feeds the thousand Dark Young of the Black Goat of the Tulgey Wood, the Duchess, to play croquet.”

Then they both bowed low, and their curls got entangled together.

Alice laughed so much at this, that she had to run back into the wood for fear of their hearing her and enslaving her. And when she next peeped out the fishy Ibling Footman was gone, and the Deep One Footman was squelching down onto the ground near the door, starting stupidly up at the invisible, ancient stars in the daylit sky.

Alice went past him. She went timidly up to the door, and knocked.

“There’s no sort of use in knocking,” said the Footman, “and that for two reasons. First, because I, her servitor, am on the same side of the door as you are. Secondly, because they’re cornering a reluctant sacrifice, and making such a noise inside, no one could possibly hear you.” And certainly there *was* a most extraordinary noise going on within—a constant begging and shrieking, and every now and then a great crash, as if an axe had crashed down on a chair and flindered it to pieces.

“Please, then,” said Alice, “how am I to get in?”

“There might be some sense in your knocking,” the Footman went on without attending her, “if we had the door between us. For instance, if you were *inside*, you might knock, and—unless otherwise commanded—I could let you out, you know.” He was goggling up into the sky all the time he was speaking, and this Alice thought decidedly uncivil. “But perhaps he can’t help it,” she said to herself. “His eyes are so *very* nearly at the top of his jellied, translucent skull. But at any rate, he might answer questions.”

“How am I to get in?” she repeated, aloud.

“I shall sit here,” the Footman remarked, “till the stars are right—”

At this moment the door of the mansion opened, and a bloody cleaver came skimming out, straight at the Footman’s head. It just grazed his sunken nose, and *thwunked* deeply into one of the trees behind him.

“Or until the End of All,” the Footman continued in the same tone, exactly as if nothing had happened.

“How am I to get in?” asked Alice again, in a louder tone.

“*Are* you to get in at all? Are you worthy of such an end?” said the Footman. “That’s the first question, you know.”

It was, no doubt, only Alice did not like to be told so. “It’s really dreadful,” she muttered to herself, “the way all the Things argue. It’s enough to drive one crazy!”

The Footman seemed to think this a good opportunity for repeating his omen, with variations. “I shall sit here,” he said, “on and off, for ages and ages.”

“But what am *I* to do?” said Alice.

“Anything you like, while there is still time,” said the Footman, and began whistling.

“Oh, there’s no use in talking to a Deep One,” said Alice desperately. “He’s perfectly idiotic!” And she opened the door herself and went in.

The mansion’s black door led right into a blood-spattered kitchen, which was choked with greasy smoke from one end to the other. The Duchess, Keziah Mason, was sitting on a three-legged stool in the middle, nursing the satyr-like Son of the Black Goat. The cook was leaning over the fire, stirring a bulbous cauldron which seemed to be bobbing with bloody heads.

“There’s certainly too much Nightgaunt ichor in that soup!” Alice said to herself, as well as she could for gagging.

There was certainly too much of it in the *air*. Even the Duchess gagged occasionally. And as for the satiric baby, it was gagging and howling alternately without a moment’s pause. The only Things in the kitchen that did *not* gag, were the cook, and a large cat which was sitting on the hearth and grinning from ear to ear.

“Please would you tell me,” said Alice, a little timidly, for she was not quite sure whether it was good manners for her to speak first, “why your cat grins like that?”

“It’s a Cheshire Cat, elder even than all the matriarchs of Ulthar,” said the Duchess, “and that’s why. *Goat!*”

She said the last word with such sudden bloodthirst that Alice quite jumped. But Alice saw in another moment that it was addressed to the disfigured baby, and not to her, so she took courage, and went on again:

“I didn’t know that Cheshire Cats always grinned. In fact, I didn’t know that cats *could* grin.”

“They all can,” said the Duchess, “and most of ’em do.”

“I don’t know of any that do,” Alice said very politely, feeling quite pleased to have got into a conversation.

“You don’t know much,” said the Duchess, “and that’s a fact.”

Alice did not at all like the tone of this remark, and thought it would be as well to introduce some safer subject of conversation. While she was trying to fix on one, the cook took the cauldron of silently screaming heads off the fire, and at once set to work throwing everything within her reach at the Duchess and the baby. The severed arms came first; then followed a shower of entrails, stomachs and brains. The Duchess took no notice of them even when they splattered against her, and the baby was howling so much already, that it was quite impossible to say whether the blows hurt it or not.

“Oh, *please* mind what you’re doing!” cried Alice, jumping up and down in an agony of disgust. “Oh, there goes his *precious* nose!”, as an unusually sharp cleaver flew close by it, and very nearly carried it off.

“If everybody minded their own business,” the Duchess said in a salacious growl, “the Black Cinders would roll round a deal faster than they do.”

“Which would *not* be an advantage,” said Alice, who felt very glad to get an opportunity of showing off a little of her eldritch lore. “Just think of what work it would make with the day and night! You see, the Earth, unlike Yith or Carcosa, takes twenty-four hours to turn round on its axis—”

“Talking of axes,” said the Duchess, “chop off her head!”

Alice glanced rather anxiously at the cook, to see if she meant to take the hint. But the cook was busily stirring intestines into the soup, and seemed not to be listening, so Alice went on again: “Twenty-four hours, I *think*. Or is it twelve? I—”

“Oh, don’t tempt *me*,” said the Duchess. “I never could bear to teleport by aid of figures!” And with that she began nursing her child again, singing a sort of black lullaby to it as she did so, and giving it a violent shake at the end of every line:

*“Speak roughly to your little goat,
And beat him when he sneezes;
He only coughs it from the throat,
Because he knows it teases.”*

CHORUS

(In which the cook and the baby joined):

“Fhtagn! Fhtagn! Fhtagn!”

While the Duchess chanted the second verse of the incantation, she kept tossing the goat-baby violently up and down, and the poor little thing howled so, that Alice could hardly hear the words:

*“I cast severely for my boy,
I beat him when he sneezes;
For he can wretchedly enjoy
The ichor when he pleases!”*

CHORUS

“Fhtagn! Fhtagn! Fhtagn!”

“Here! You may nurse it a bit, if you like!” the Duchess shrieked at Alice, flinging the baby at her as she cackled. “I must go and get ready to play croquet with the Queen in Crimson,” and she hurried out of the bloody chamber. The cook threw a battle axe after her as she went out, but it just missed her.

Alice caught the baby with some difficulty, as it was a queer-shaped little creature, and held out its arms and legs in all directions, *Just like the starfish-head of an Elder Thing*, thought Alice. The poor little thing was gagging like a Spawn of Tsathogghua when she caught it, and kept doubling itself up and straightening itself out again, so that altogether, for the first minute or two, it was as much as she could do to hold it.

As soon as she had made out the proper way of nursing it (which was to twist it up into a pulpy knot, and then keep tight hold of its right horn and left hoof, so as to prevent its undoing itself), she carried it out into the open air. *If I don't take this satyr-changeling away with me*, thought Alice, *they're sure to kill it in a day or two*.

"Wouldn't it be murder to leave it behind?" She said the last words out loud, and the pug-nosed thing grunted in reply (it had left off gagging by this time). "Don't grunt," said Alice. "Unless you're of Leng, that's not at all a proper way of expressing yourself."

The baby grunted again, and Alice looked very anxiously into its face to see what was the matter with it. There could be no doubt that it had a *very* turned-up nose, much more like a snout than a real nose; also its eyes (he had his Father's eyes) were getting extremely yellow for a baby. Altogether, Alice did not like the look of the Thing at all. *But perhaps it is only sobbing for death*, she thought, and looked into its eyes again, to see if there were any tears of blood.

No, there were no tears. "If you're going to turn into a goat, my dear," said Alice, seriously, "I'll have nothing more to do with you. Mind now!" The infernal little thing sobbed again (or bleated, it was impossible to say which), and they went on for some while in silence.

Save me, begged the goat-child in her mind.

Alice was just beginning to think to herself, *Now, what am I to do with this Thing when I get it home?* when it bleated again, so violently, that she looked down into its face in some alarm. This time there could be *no* mistake about it: It was neither more nor less than a black goat, and she felt that it would be quite absurd for her to carry it further.

It coughed out a bubble of blood, then bleated these strange, sing-song words to Alice: “*Ph’nglui mglw’nafh Cthulhu R’lyeh wgah’nagl fhtagn.*”

So, trying not to panic, Alice set the little Thing down, and felt quite relieved to see it trot away impishly into the wood. “If it had grown up,” she said to herself, “it would have made a dreadfully ugly child. But it makes rather a handsome goat, I think.”

And she began thinking over other children she knew, who might do very well as goat-spawn, and was just saying to herself, “If one only knew the occult way in which to change them—” when she was a little startled by seeing the Cheshire Cat sitting on a bough of a tree a few yards off.

The Cat only grinned when it saw Alice. It looked good-natured, she thought. Still, it had very long claws and a great many fangs, so she felt that it ought to be treated with respect.

“Cheshire Puss,” she began, rather timidly, as she did not at all know whether it would like the name. However, it only grinned a little wider. *Come, it’s pleased so far*, thought Alice, and she went on. “Would you tell me, please, which way I ought to go through this Tulgey Wood, to avoid being eaten or sacrificed?”

“That depends a good deal on which world you want to get to,” said the Cat.

“I don’t much care where—” said Alice.

“Then it doesn’t matter which way you fall,” said the Cat.

“—So long as I get *somewhere*,” Alice added as an explanation.

“Oh, you’re sure to do that,” said the Cat, “if only you fall far enough.”

Alice felt that this could not be denied, so she tried another more vexing question. “What sort of Horrors lurk about here?”

“In *that* direction,” the Cat said, waving its right paw round, “lives Pickman the Hatter. And in *that* direction,” waving the other paw, “lives the March Zoog. Visit either you like. They’re both mad.”

“But I don’t want to go among mad people,” Alice remarked.

“Oh, you can’t help that,” said the Cat. “We’re all mad here. I’m mad. You’re mad.”

“How do you know I’m mad?” said Alice.

“You must be,” said the Cat. “Or else you wouldn’t have come here.”

Alice believed that did not prove it at all. However, she went on, “And how do you know that you’re mad?”

“To begin with,” said the Cat, “a dog’s not mad. You grant that?”

“I suppose so,” said Alice.

“Well then,” the Cat went on, “you see, a dog growls when it’s angry, and wags its tail when it’s pleased. Now *I* growl when I’m pleased, and wag my tail when I’m angry. Therefore I’m mad.”

“*I* call it purring, not growling,” said Alice.

“Call it what you like,” said the Cat. “Do you play the game of death with the Queen in Crimson today?”

“I should like to very much,” said Alice, “but I haven’t been invited yet.”

“You’ll see me there,” said the Cat, and vanished.

Alice was not much surprised at this, she was getting used to insane things happening. While she was looking at the place where it had been, it suddenly appeared again.

“By the bye, what became of the baby?” said the Cat. “I’d nearly forgotten to ask.”

“It turned into a goat,” Alice quietly said, just as if it had come back in a natural way.

“So like the Father. I thought it would,” said the Cat, and vanished again.

Alice waited a little, half expecting to see it again, but it did not appear, and after a minute or two she walked on in the direction in which the March

Zoog was said to lair. “I’ve seen Hatters before,” she said to herself. “The March Zoog will be much the most interesting, although I’ve seen the White Zoog as well, and perhaps as this is Midsummer it won’t still be raving mad. At least, not so mad as it was in March.” As she said this, she looked up, and there was the Cat again, sitting on a branch of a tree.

“Did you say ‘goat,’ or ‘throat?’” said the Cat.

“I said ‘goat,’” replied Alice, “and I wish you wouldn’t keep appearing and vanishing so suddenly. You make one quite giddy!”

“All right,” said the Cat. And this time it vanished quite slowly, beginning with the end of the tail, and ending with the grin, which remained some time after the rest of it had gone.

Well! I’ve often see a cat without a grin, thought Alice, but a grin without a cat! It’s the most curious thing I ever saw in my life!

She had not gone much farther before she came in sight of the dilapidated temple of the March Zoog. She thought it must be the right temple, because the spires were shaped like Zoog ears and the roof was thatched with fur of Zoog. It was so monstrous a temple, that she did not like to go nearer till she had nibbled some more of the left-hand bit of mushroom flesh, and raised herself to about two feet high. Even then, she walked up towards it rather timidly, saying to herself, “Suppose *this* Zoog should be raving mad after all! I almost wish I’d gone to see the Hatter instead!”

CHAPTER 7

A Madder Tea Party

There was a pagan feast-table set out under a Tumtum tree in front of the temple, and the March Zoog and Pickman the Hatter were having tea at it. Young Jermyn, a degenerate Ape Boy, was nestled between them, fast asleep, and the other two were using him as a cushion, resting their elbows on him, and talking over his nightmare-drowning head. “Very uncomfortable for the Ape Boy,” thought Alice. “Only, as he’s asleep, I suppose he doesn’t mind.”

The table was a large one, but the three were all crowded together at one corner of it. “No room! No room!” they cried out when they saw Alice coming. “There’s *plenty* of room!” said Alice indignantly, and she sat down in a baroque armchair at one end of the table.

“Have some Delaporean wine,” the March Zoog said in an encouraging tone.

Alice looked all round the table, but there was nothing on it but tea. “I don’t see any wine,” she remarked.

“There isn’t any,” said the March Zoog.

“Then it wasn’t very civil of you to offer it,” said Alice angrily.

“It wasn’t very civil of you to sit down without being invited,” said the March Zoog.

“I didn’t know it was *your* table,” said Alice. “It’s laid for a great many more than three.”

“Would that I could paint you, once you’re ripe. But your hair wants cutting,” said the Hatter. He had been looking at Alice for some time with great curiosity, and this was his first speech.

“You should learn not to make personal remarks,” Alice said with some severity. “It’s very rude.”

The Hatter opened his dreaming eyes very wide on hearing this. But all he *said* was, “Why is a piping Outer God like a Shining Trapezohedron?”

Come, we shall have some fun now! thought Alice. *I’m glad they’ve begun asking riddles.* “I believe I can guess that,” she added aloud.

“Do you mean that you can dare to fathom the terror?” said the March Zoog.

“Exactly so,” said Alice.

“Then you should say what you fear,” the March Zoog went on.

“I do,” Alice hastily replied. “At least—at least I fear what I say—that’s the same thing, you know.”

“Now the same thing a bit!” said the hatter. “You might just as well say ‘I slay what I eat’ is the same thing as ‘I eat what I slay!’”

“You might just as well say,” added the March Zoog, “that ‘I dread all I haunt’ is the same thing as ‘I haunt all I dread!’”

“You might just as well say,” added the Ape Boy, who seemed to be whispering in his sleep, “that ‘I die when I dream’ is the same thing as ‘I dream when I die!’”

“It is the same thing with you,” said the Hatter, and here the conversation dropped, and the party sat silent for a minute, while Alice thought over all she could remember about piping Outer Gods and Shining Trapezohedrons, which wasn’t much.

The Hatter was the first to break the silence. “What day of the moon is it?” he said, turning to Alice. He had taken his Yithian chronometer out of his pocket, and was looking at it uneasily, shaking it every now and then, and holding it to his ear.

Alice considered a little, and then said, “The waxing gibbous.”

“Two twilights wrong!” sighed the Hatter. “I told you tears wouldn’t suit the works!” he added, looking angrily at the March Zoog.

“They were the *best* tears,” the March Zoog meekly replied.

“Yes, but some pus droplets must have got in as well,” the Hatter grumbled. “You shouldn’t have shoved those remains in with the carving knife.”

The March Zoog took the Yithian watch and looked at it gloomily. Then he dipped it into his cup of tea, and looked at it again. But he could think of nothing better to say than his first remark, “They were the *best* tears, you know.”

Alice had been looking over his shoulder with some horror. “What a spawn-filled watch!” she remarked, as she beheld the chronometer. “It tells the species of the vessel, the sphere, the dimension, and doesn’t *ever* tell what o’clock it is!”

“Why should it?” muttered the Hatter. “Does *your* Yithian chronometer tell you which aeon it is?”

“Of course not,” Alice replied very readily. “But that’s because it stays the same aeon for such a long time together.”

“Which, I dare hope, is just the case with *mine*,” said the Hatter.

Alice felt dreadfully puzzled. The Hatter’s remark seemed to have no sort of meaning in it, and yet it was certainly English. “I don’t quite understand you,” she said, as politely as she could.

“The Ape Boy is dreaming again,” said the Hatter, and he poured a little hot tea upon Jermyn’s nose.

The Ape Boy shook his head savagely, and said, without opening his eyes, “R’lyeh of the spires ... the angles conjoining all the tombs ... the tombs, in which slumber the dreaming ... dreaming, waking ... for death is but the beginning.”

“Have you guessed the riddle yet?” the Hatter said, turning to Alice again.

“No, I give it up,” Alice replied. “What’s the answer?”

“I haven’t the slightest idea,” said the Hatter.

“Nor I,” said the March Zoog. “Nodens forbend.”

Alice sighed wearily. “I think you might do something better with your mortal years,” she said, “than waste them in asking riddles that have no answers.”

“If you knew the Godling of All the Aeons as well as I do,” said the Hatter, “you wouldn’t talk about wasting *them*. They are *him*.”

“I don’t know what you mean,” said Alice.

“Of course you don’t!” the Hatter cried, tossing his head contemptuously. “I dare say you never even spoke to Nephren-Ka, He who Bends Time to Bow to Him!”

“Perhaps not,” Alice cautiously replied. “But I know I have to beat time when I learn music.”

“Ah! That accounts for it,” said the Hatter. “He won’t stand beating. Now, if you only kept on good terms with Him, He’d do almost anything you liked with the chronometer. For instance, suppose you longed for an age of flower, just time enough to begin being a woman. You’d only have to whisper a hint to Nephren-Ka, and round goes your life in a twinkling! Half past dead, time to end it all!”

(“I only wish that time would be,” the March Zoog said to itself in a whisper.)

“That would be grand, certainly,” said Alice thoughtfully. “But then, I shouldn’t be so desirous of my aging, you know.”

“Not at first, perhaps,” said the Hatter. “But with the proper sacrifices, you could keep your life at half past dead as long as you liked.”

“Is that the way *you* manage?” Alice asked.

The Hatter shook his head mournfully. “Not I!” he replied. “Nephren-Ka and I quarreled last March—just before he went mad, you know—”

(pointing with his tea spoon at the March Zoog,) “It was at the great convocation reigned over by the Queen in Crimson, and I had to sing:

‘Twinkle, twinkle, little Byakhee!

How I wonder why you mock me!’

You know the song, perhaps?”

“I’ve heard something like it,” said Alice.

“It goes on, you know,” the Hatter continued, “in this way:

‘Up above dead worlds you fly,

Like Carcosa in the sky.

Twinkle, twinkle—’”

Here the Ape Boy shook himself, and began gibbering in his sleep “*‘Twinkle, twinkle, corpse-lights, twinkle—’*” and went on so long that they had to pinch him to make him stop.

“Well, I’d hardly finished the first verse,” said the Hatter, “when the Queen jumped up and shrieked, ‘He’s murdering the Time! Off with his head!’”

“How dreadfully savage!” exclaimed Alice.

“And ever since that,” the Hatter went on in a direful tone, “Time won’t do a thing I ask! It’s always six o’clock now.”

A bright idea came into Alice’s head. “Is that the reason so many tea things are put out here?” she asked.

“Yes, that’s it,” said the Hatter with a portentous sigh. “It’s always tea time, and we’ve no time to wash the things between whiles.”

“Then you keep moving round in hope of escape, I suppose?” said Alice.

“Exactly so,” said the Hatter. “As the things get used up and our will to live is drained from us.”

“But what happens when you come to the beginning again, or are drained entirely?” Alice ventured to ask.

“Suppose we change the subject,” the March Zoog interrupted, yawning. “I’m getting tired of this. I vote the young lady tells us a phantasmagoric tale of woe in which the primary characters are inbred aristocrats, whose incestuous psyches are represented by a divided Gothic mansion, decaying and crumbling into a God-forsaken quagmire.”

“I’m afraid I don’t know one,” said Alice, rather alarmed at the proposal.

“Then the Ape Boy shall!” they both cried. “Wake up, Jermyn!” And they pinched him on both sides at once.

The Ape Boy slowly opened his eyes. “I wasn’t asleep, only spirit-wracked and lost in the titanic vaults of dread R’lyeh,” he said in a hoarse, feeble voice. “I heard every word you fellows were saying.”

“Tell us a macabre story of inbred murderesses!” said the March Zoog.

“Yes, please do!” pleaded Alice.

“And be quick about it,” added the Hatter, “or you’ll be asleep again, psychically submerged and drowning as an agonized dream-mote, locked in the octopoid brain of dread Cthulhu before you’re done.”

“Once upon a time there were three little sisters,” the Ape Boy began in a great hurry, “and their names were Hagatha, Jezebel and Ashmodai, and they lived at the bottom of a well, in which they had been thrown by their horrified, barren and adoptive mother—”

“What did they live on?” said Alice, who always took a great interest in questions of drinking and devouring.

“They feasted on their own fingernails to survive, and they drank treacle,” said the Ape Boy, after shivering for a minute or two.

“They couldn’t have done that, you know,” Alice gently remarked. “They’d have been ill, or dead.”

“So they were,” said the Ape Boy. “*Very* dead.”

Alice tried to fancy to herself what such an extraordinary way of dying would be like, but it troubled her too much, so she went on: “But why did they die at the bottom of a well?”

“Take some more tea,” the March Zoog said to Alice, very earnestly.

“I’ve had nothing yet,” Alice replied in an offended tone, “so I can’t take more.”

“You mean you can’t take *less*,” said the Hatter. “It’s very easy to take *more* than nothing, unless you’re non-corporeal and lost in the Vermilion Void.”

“Nobody asked *your* opinion,” said Alice.

“Who’s making personal remarks now?” the Hatter asked triumphantly.

Alice did not quite know what to say to this, so she helped herself to some tea and bread-and-ichor, and then turned to the Ape Boy, and tremulously repeated her question. “Why did they die at the bottom of a well?”

The Ape Boy again took a minute or two to shiver about it, and then whispered, “They were unholy. It was a treacle well.”

“There’s no such thing!” Alice was beginning very angrily, but the Hatter and the March Zoog went “Shh! Shh!” and the Ape Boy sulkily remarked, “If you can’t be civil, you’d better end this tale of the horrible, undead drowning girls yourself.”

“No, please go on!” said Alice very humbly. “I won’t interrupt again, I dare say I want to hear.”

“Hear, indeed!” said the Ape Boy indignantly. However, he consented to go on. “And so these three dread sisters—they were learning to eat each

other, you know—”

“Who did they eat first?” said Alice, quite forgetting her promise.

“Jezebel, the plump one,” said the Ape Boy, without considering at all this time.

“I want a clean cup, and I think this chair is quite accursed by the Voorish Sign,” interrupted the Hatter. “Let’s all move one place on.”

He moved on as he spoke, and the Ape Boy followed him to his doom. The March Zoog moved into the Ape Boy’s place, and Alice rather unwillingly took the place of the March Zoog, checking her chair for demoniac sigils all the while. The Hatter was the only one who got any advantage from the change, and Alice was a good deal worse off than before, as the March Zoog had just upset a jug of bubbling Proto-Shoggoth plasma into his plate.

Alice did not wish to offend the Ape Boy again, so she began very cautiously: “But I don’t understand. Where did they draw the treacle from?”

“You can draw souls out of a soul well,” said the Hatter. “So I should think you could draw treacle out of a treacle well—eh, stupid?”

“But they were suffering *in* the well,” Alice said to the Ape Boy, not choosing to notice this last remark.

“Of course they were,” said the Ape Boy. “Suffering well.”

This answer so confused poor Alice, that she let the Ape Boy babble on incoherently for some time without daring to interrupt him.

“They were unwillingly learning cannibalism,” the Ape Boy went on, yawning and barely refraining from gouging out his eyes, for he was getting very sleepy and knew that the nightmares of dead Cthulhu were nigh once more; “and they devoured all manner of body parts—everything that begins with an M—”

“Why with an M?” said Alice.

“Why not?” said the March Zoog. “Cannibalism grows rather monotonous if you choose not to make a game of it.”

Alice was silent.

The Ape Boy had closed his bloodshot eyes by this time, and was descending down into nightmare; but, on being pinched by the Hatter, he woke up again with a little shriek, and hissed out: “That begins with an M, such as marrow, and mandibles, and metatarsals, and flesh in all its muchness—you know you say things are ‘much of a muchness’—did you ever see such a thing as a feasting upon a muchness?”

“Really, now you ask me,” said Alice, very much horrified, “I don’t think—”

“Then you shouldn’t talk,” said the Hatter.

This piece of rudeness was more than Alice’s teetering sanity could bear. She got up in the beginnings of a deadly mania, and stalked off. The Ape Boy fell asleep instantly, weeping for oblivion, and neither of the others took the least notice of Alice’s going, though she looked back once or twice, half hoping that they would turn to her. The last time she saw them, they were chanting “Save him! Save him!” while trying to stuff the Ape Boy into the urn-like maw of an oubliette.

“At any rate I’ll never go *there* again!” said Alice as she picked her way through the dismal, miasmal shadows of the ragged, earthquaked ruins which jagged up throughout the Tulgey Wood. “That was by far the deathliest, the most abominably troglodytic tea party I ever was at in all my life!”

Just as she said this, she noticed that one of the Cyclopean monoliths had a necropolis vault door leading right back into the deeper depths of the netherworld. *That’s very curious!* she thought. *But everything’s curious today. I think I may as well go in at once.*

And in she went.

Once more she found herself in the Hall of the Dead, and close to the chthonic crystal table. “Now I’ll manage more suicidally this time,” she said to herself. “May I wake, or else find any release that I can.” She began by taking R. Carter’s resonating silver key, and unlocking the Rat-Thing door that led into the corpse garden where all hope was to be ended. Then

she went to work nibbling at the still-bleeding mushroom flesh (she had kept a whimpering piece of it in her pocket) till she was about a foot high. Then she walked down the maggot-twisty passage, and *then* she found herself at last in the gods-forsaken garden, among the withered flower beds and the bone-chilling fountains.

CHAPTER 8

The Queen's Slaughter Ground

A diseased rose tree, overflowing with corpulent blossoms of vile and fleshly substance, stood near the entrance of that garden of the damned. The roses (swelling upon it like tumorous pustules) were pale, but there were three Paduan herbalists picking at the flower-sores, bleeding them and busily turning them crimson. Alice thought this a very curious thing, and she went nearer to watch them, and just as she crept up to them she heard one of them cackle, "Despair you, Quintus! Don't go splashing sanies and pus all over me like that!"

"I couldn't help it," said Quintus, in a sulky tone. "Septimus gnawed my elbow."

On which Septimus wiped his bloody lips and hissed, "That's right, Quintus! Always lay the blame on others!"

"*You'd* better not sleep tonight!" warned Quintus. "I heard the Queen in Crimson say only yester-eve you deserved to be beheaded!"

"What for?" said the one who had spoken first, licking his lips in utmost schadenfreude.

"That's none of *your* sadistic phantasy, Secundus!" said Septimus.

"Yes, it *is* his phantasy!" said Quintus, "and I'll tell him—it was for bringing the cook a sacrificial virgin instead of an orphan."

Septimus flung down his plague lancet, and had just begun, "Well, of all the gruesome things—" when his parasite-infested eye chanced to fall upon Alice, as she stood watching them aghast, and he checked himself suddenly. The others looked round also, and all of them groveled and bowed low for their lives.

“Would you tell me,” said Alice, a little timidly, “why you are lancing those pustulant roses?”

Quintus and Septimus said nothing, but looked at Secundus. Secundus began in a croaking voice, “Why the fact is, you see, Dark Mistress, this here ought to have been a *syphilitic* rose-tree, and we put a *bubonic* one in by mistake. And if the Queen was to find it out, we should all have our heads cut off and our entrails used as *hors d’oeuvres*, you know. So you see, Mistress, we’re doing our best, afore she comes, to—”

At this moment Quintus, who had been nigh to soiling himself while gazing across the garden, called out “The Queen in Crimson! The Queen!” And the three venomous herbalists instantly threw themselves flat upon their faces. There was a sound of many jackboots, and Alice looked round, eager (much like a tantalized victim of Medusa) to behold the Queen.

First came ten armored and cowled Men of Leng, carrying hammers of the slaughterhouse. These were all shaped much like the three herbalists, skeletal and emaciated, with their hands and feet twitching out at their twisted edges. Next the ten sycophantic and wraith-like servitors; these were ornamented all over with Lemurian crystal-fungus, and skulked two and two, as the Men of Leng did. After these came the royal spawn. There were ten of them, and the little dears came scuttling merrily along claw in claw, in couples. They were all ornamented with mummified hearts, torn from out of their slower and weaker siblings.

Next came the hierophantic aristocrats, mostly Kings and Queens of the conquered kingdoms, and among them Alice recognized one favored thrall, the White Zoog. It was talking in a spastic, nervous manner, giving a rictus grin at everything that was said, and it crawled by without noticing her. Then followed a corpulent Ghoul, the Knave of Hearts, carrying the King’s death mask on a crimson velvet cushion all made of veiny flesh. And, last of all this grand procession, came the King in Yellow and the Queen in Crimson.

Alice was rather doubtful whether she ought not to despair and to lie down on her face, awaiting disembowelment and decapitation like the three herbalists, but she could not remember ever having heard of such a rule at Carcosan processions. “And besides, what would be the use of such a

Hasturian cavalcade,” thought she, “if victims had all to lie upon their faces, so that they couldn’t be driven mad by beholding it?” So she stood still where she was, and in abject terror, she waited.

When the procession came opposite Alice, they all stopped and gazed at her, and the Queen gibbered severely, “Is this fated? Whose whelp is this?” She said it to the undead Knave of Hearts, who only dripped and simpered in reply.

“Idiot! Outsider!” said the Queen, tossing her Ghastly head impatiently. And, turning to Alice, she went on, “What’s your name, delicious child?”

“My name is Alice Pleasance Liddell, of the abhorred and accursed Oxfordshire Liddells, so please your Majesty,” said Alice very politely. But she added to herself, “Why they’re only a pack of skeletal wastrels whose thin and boxy flesh makes them look like oblong Tarot cards, after all. I needn’t be afraid of them!”

“And who are *these*?” said the Queen, pointing one gilded claw to the three herbalists who were lying round the bubonic rose tree. For, you see, as they were lying on their faces, and the tattooed swirls of oblivion burned into their backs were the same as upon the rest of the brood, so she could not tell whether they were Paduan herbalists, or Men of Leng, or sycophantic aristocrats, or three of her own degenerate spawn.

“How should *I* know?” said Alice, surprised at her own mad courage. “It’s no business of *mine*.”

The Queen in Crimson turned a deeper shade, and, after glaring at Alice for a moment like a slaving Great Old One, screamed “Feast on her bowels! Off with her head! Off—”

“Madness!” said Alice, very loudly and decidedly, and the Queen was silent.

The King in Yellow laid his pox-sheened talons upon the Queen’s arm, and alluringly whispered, “Consider, my sweetmeat. She is a Liddell child.”

The Queen turned ravenously away from him, and growled to the Knave, “Fiend! Turn these fools over!”

The Knave did so, very carefully, with one clubfooted and wasted leg.

“Get up!” said the Queen, in a shrill, hungry voice, and the three herbalists instantly jumped up, and began begging to the King, the Queen, the royal spawn, and everything else.

“Leave off that!” screamed the Queen. “You do make me yearn so for the feasting.” And then, turning to the scabrous rose tree, she went on, “What *have* you been doing here?”

“May it please your crimson Majesty,” said Secundus, in a hopeless and humble tone, going down on one knee as he begged, “we were trying—”

“I see all!” said the Queen, who had meanwhile been licking the roses with her slender and buboed tongue. “Spice them! Tenderize them! Off with their heads!” And the grim procession stalked on, three of the hammer-bearing Men of Leng remaining behind to execute and to dress the unfortunate herbalists, who crawled to Alice for protection.

“You shan’t be beheaded!” whispered Alice, and she put them into a large funereal urn that loomed near. The three Men of Leng scuttled about for a minute or two, scenting the plague-wasted ground, and then quietly skulked off after the others.

“Is their meat sweetened? Are their heads off?” shouted the Queen.

“Their heads are gone, if it please your Majesty!” the Men of Leng chanted in reply.

“That’s right!” purred the Queen, scratching the swoon of her pendulous belly. “Dare you play the game of death? Can you play croquet?”

The Men of Leng were silent, and stared at Alice, as the question was evidently meant for her.

“Yes!” shouted Alice, last fated daughter of her bloodline.

“Come forth, then!” roared the Queen, and Alice was clawed into the procession, wondering very much what nightmarish travesty would happen next.

“It’s—it’s to be a wretched night!” said a timid voice at her side. She was walking beside the White Zoog, who was peeping anxiously into her face.

“Very,” said Alice. “Where’s the Duchess Mason?”

“Hush! Hush!” said the Zoog in a low, hurried tone. He looked anxiously over his flank as he spoke, and then raised himself up on tip-claw, put his tentacle-whiskered mouth close to Alice’s ear, and whispered, “She’s under sentence of execution.”

“What for?” said Alice.

“Did you say ‘What a delight?’” the Zoog asked.

“No,” said Alice. “I don’t think it’s a delight. Yet. I said, ‘What for?’”

“The Duchess teleported in and quite accidentally belched in the Queen’s unearthly face—” the Zoog began. Alice gave a little scream of hysterical laughter. “Oh, hush!” the Zoog whispered in a peril-fraught tone. “The Queen in Crimson will hear you! You see, she came in rather late, and the Queen chanted—”

“Game of death! Get to your places!” shouted the Queen in a voice of burbling thunder, and lost souls began scurrying about in all directions, tumbling up against each other. However, they got settled down into a mordant paralysis in a minute or two, and the game began. Alice thought she had never seen such a murderous croquet-ground in her life. It was all corpse-strewn ridges and skull-piled furrows. The balls were live Mi-Go spores, the mallets distended limbs of shredded Ghouls, and the Men of Leng had to break and twist their own spines backward to sprawl on their crackling hands and feet to make the arches.

The repugnant difficulty Alice found at first was in managing her gore-encrusted limb-mallet. She succeeded in getting the Ghoul leg’s ankle tucked away, comfortably enough, under her arm, with its tendons gangling down, but generally, just as she had got its femur nicely straightened out from its undead struggling, and was going to give the Mi-Go spore a blow to its bloated eye, the limb *would* twist itself round and seep filth toward her face, with such a festering sloppiness that Alice could not help bursting out screaming. And when she had got its clawed foot down, and was going to

begin again, it was very provoking to find that the Mi-Go spore had imploded itself, and was in the act of giving birth to thousands of fungal millipedes, which were in the act of crawling away.

Besides all this, there was generally a corpse-ridge or skull-furrow in the way wherever she wanted to knock her deflated spore to, and, as the back-splintered Men of Leng were always getting up in their death throes and twitching off to other parts of the bloodied ground, Alice soon came to the conclusion that it was a very grim game indeed.

The players all played at once without waiting for turns, begging for mercy all the while, and fighting over the fungal millipedes. And in a very short time, the Queen was in a furious passion, and went stamping about, bellowing “Off with his head!” or “Off with its head!” about once a minute.

Alice began to feel very uneasy. To be sure, she had not as yet sworn any murder vow of mutual annihilation against the Queen, but she knew that it might happen any minute. *And then*, thought she, *what would become of me? They’re dreadfully fond of beheading and devouring people here. The great wonder is, that there’s anyone left alive!*

She was looking about for some way of escape, or wondering (if it came to that) whether she could open her veins without being seen, when she noticed a curious and vorpal specter in the air. It puzzled her very much at first, but, after watching it a minute or two, she made it out to be a fang-laden grin, and she said to herself, “It’s the Cheshire Cat. Now I shall have somebody to plot treason with.”

“Quite the charnel taste, all round here. How are you getting on?” said the Cat, licking his teeth, as soon as there was mouth enough for him to speak with.

Alice waited till the eyes appeared, and then nodded in desperation. *It’s no use speaking to him*, she thought, *till his ears have come, or at least one of them.* In another minute, from out of the hyper-dimensional vortex conjoining space and time, the whole head appeared, and then Alice put down her Ghoul limb, and began an account of the game of death, feeling very glad she had someone to listen to her. The Cat seemed to think there was enough of himself now in sight, and no more of him appeared.

“I don’t think they play at all fairly,” Alice began, in a rather complaining tone, “and they all desire tortured flesh so dreadfully one can’t hear oneself think. And they don’t seem to honor any mercy oaths in particular. At least, if there are, nobody attends to them. And you’ve no idea how confusing it is, not all the things being alive! For instance, there’s the arch I’ve got to go through next, twisting about in agony at the other end of the slaughter ground. And I should have croqueted the Queen’s Mi-Go spore just now, only it squelched away and imploded into millipedes when it saw mine was already bloating!”

“How do you like the Queen?” said the Cat in a low voice.

“Not at all,” said Alice. “She’s so extremely—” Just then she noticed that the Queen had prowled close behind her, seething. So she went on, “Likely to win and feast upon me, that it’s hardly worthwhile struggling to stay alive.”

The Queen leered thirstily at this, and shambled on.

“Who *are* you talking to?” whisper-trilled the King in Yellow, floating up to Alice, and gazing at the Cat’s head with great curiosity.

“He’s a friend of mine—a Cheshire Cat,” said Alice. “Allow me to introduce him.”

“A guardian Cat, elder than all the matriarchs of Ulthar? I don’t like the look of it at all,” said the King. “However, it may feed from my hand if it likes.”

“I’d rather not,” the Cat remarked.

“Don’t be impertinent,” said the King, “and don’t look at me like that!” He levitated behind Alice as he spoke.

“A Cat may look at a King,” said Alice. “I’ve read that in a sanguinary grimoire, but I don’t remember where.”

“Well, it must be banished unto the utmost void,” said the King very decidedly, and he growled out to the Queen, who was passing at the moment, “My succulence! I wish you would have this guardian Cat removed!”

The Queen had only one way of settling all treasonous uprisings, great or small. “Off with his head!” she roared, without even turning round.

“I’ll fetch the Kadathian executioner myself,” said the King eagerly, and he glided off.

Alice thought she might as well go back, and see how the game of death was going on, as she heard the Queen’s voice in the distance, screaming with bloodthirst. She had already heard her Majesty sentence three of the players to be executed for having dared beg for their lives. Alice did not like the look of things at all, as the game was in such confusion that she never knew whether it was her turn for demise or not. So she went in search of her own bloated Mi-Go spore.

The spore was engaged in a revolting puffball synthesis against another spore, which seemed to Alice an excellent opportunity for croquetting one of them off the other. The only difficulty was, that her Ghoul leg was gone across to the other side of the poison garden, where Alice could see it trying in a helpless sort of way to reattach itself to a corpse.

By the time she had caught the leg and dragged it back, the merging of spores was over, and both swarms of millipedes were out of sight. *But it doesn’t matter much*, thought Alice, *as all those spine-twisted arches are dead on this side of the ground*. So she tucked the leg away under her arm, that it might not escape again, and went back for a little more conspiracy with her friend.

When she got back to the Cheshire Cat, she was surprised to find quite a large swarm brooding round him. There was a dispute going on between the faceless executioner, the King in Yellow, and the Queen in Crimson, who were all gibbering at once, while all the rest of the swarm were quite mortified, and looked very uncomfortable.

The moment Alice appeared, she was appealed to by all three monstrosities to settle the question, and they repeated their diabolical arguments to her. However, as they all spoke at once, she found it very hard indeed to make out exactly just what sanity-blasting portents were revealed.

The Kadathian executioner’s argument was, that you couldn’t cut off a head and then jelly its eyeballs unless there was a body to cut the head off

from; that he had never had to do such a thing before, in all the aeons; and he wasn't going to begin in *this* aeon of un-life.

The King in Yellow's argument was, that anything that had a head could be beheaded, and likely eaten, and that you weren't to talk nonsense.

The Queen's argument was, that if something wasn't done about the feline guardian in less than no time she'd have everybody executed, eaten, vomited forth and eaten once more, all round. (It was this last remark that had made the whole brood look so grave and anxious.)

Alice could think of nothing else to say, but "The Cat harries and restrains the Duchess. You'd better interrogate *her* about it."

"She's in prison, entombed deep within the fungal Earth," the Queen said to the executioner. "Fetch her here." And the executioner burrowed down into the death pits of Wonderland, which loom deeper than even those of K'nyan itself.

The Cat's head began fading away the moment he was gone, and, by the time he had risen with the nigh-comatose Duchess in tow, the Cat had entirely disappeared. So the King and the executioner floated wildly up and down looking for it, while the rest of the brood went back to the game of death.

CHAPTER 9

The Mock Moonbeast's Story

"You can't think how hungry I am to see you again, you dear sweet thing!" murmured the Duchess, as she tucked her withered arm affectionately into Alice's, and they walked off together.

Alice was very glad to find the Duchess in such a not-yet-murderous temper, and thought to herself that perhaps it was only the ichor of Shub-Niggurath that had made her so savage when they met in the blood-spattered kitchen.

"When *I'm* a Duchess of Debauchery," Alice said to herself, (not in a very hopeful tone though), "I won't have any sacrifice-fertilized ichor in my kitchen at *all*. Soup does very well without. Maybe it's always ichor that makes people mad-tempered," she went on, very much pleased at having found out a new kind of mind-bending revelation, "and bile that makes them sour—and melancholia that makes them bitter—and—and—choleric phlegm that makes children evil-tempered. I only wish necromantic people knew *that*. Then they wouldn't raise the dead, you know—"

She had quite forgotten the Duchess Keziah Mason by this time, and was a little startled when she heard the voice rattle close to her ear. "You're dreaming about something, my dear, and that makes you forget to confess. I can't tell you just now what the horror of that is, but I shall remember it in a bit."

"Perhaps it hasn't a horror," Alice ventured to remark.

"Tut, tut, child!" said the Duchess. "Everything's got a horror, if only you can find it." And she squelched herself up closer to Alice's side as she spoke.

Alice did not much like keeping so close to her. First, because the Duchess was yeasty and *very* hideous. And secondly, because she was

exactly the right height to rest her warty chin upon Alice's shoulder, and it was an uncomfortably pulsing chin. However, Alice did not like to be rude, so she bore it as well as she could.

"The game of death's going on rather better now," Alice said, by way of keeping the conversation a little.

"'Tis so," said the Duchess. "And the horror of that is—"Oh, 'tis Azathoth, 'tis Azathoth that makes the void whorl round!"

"Somebody said," Alice whispered, "that it's done by everybody minding their own business!"

"Ah, well! Breathing, dying, it means much the same thing," said the Duchess, digging her infested little chin into Alice's shoulder as she added, "and the horror of *that* is—"Take care of the scents, and the Hounds will take care of themselves."

How fond she is of finding horrors in things! Alice thought to herself.

"I dare say you're wondering why I don't impale you and dig my claws up under your breastbone," the Duchess tittered after a pause. "The reason is, that I'm doubtful about the temper of your Cat. Shall I try the experiment?"

"He might bite," Alice cautiously replied, not feeling at all anxious to have the experiment tried.

"Very true," whispered the Duchess. "Cheshire Cats and sibilant locusts both bite. And the horror of that is—"Shantaks of a feather flock together."

"Only a locust isn't a Shantak," Alice remarked.

"Hopeless, as usual," said the Duchess. "What a futile way you have of putting things!"

"Sibilant locusts are minerals, I *think*," said Alice.

"Of course they are," said the Duchess, who seemed ready to agree to every desperate thing that Alice said. "There's a buried and time-lost Nameless City near here, positively bloated with locusts. And the horror of

that is—‘The more nameless you might be, lo, the more I shall gnaw inside thee.’”

“Oh, I know!” exclaimed Alice, who had not attended to this last death threat, “Sibilant locusts are vegetable. Quite like the Mi-Go. They don’t look like it, but they are.”

“I quite agree with you,” said the Duchess. “And the horror of that is—‘Swallow what you would seem to abhor,’ or if you’d like it put more simply—‘Never imagine yourself not to be doomed by that which might appear as that which you were, or might have been ever destined to be, were your not otherwise fated to a madness which you would never have brought you before Them to be elsewhere.’”

“I think I should understand that better,” Alice said very politely, “if I had it written down in blood upon a scroll of goatskin vellum. But I can’t quite follow it as you say it.”

“That’s nothing to what I could say if I chose,” the Duchess replied, in a disturbingly pleased tone.

“Pray don’t trouble yourself to say it any longer than that,” said Alice.

“Oh, and don’t you even dream about your salvation!” said the Duchess. “It takes time to spice the meat before feasting. I make you a blood gift of everything I’ve said as yet.”

A worthless sort of blood gift! thought Alice. *I’m glad they don’t give birthday presents like that!* But she did not venture to say it out loud.

“Scheming again?” the Duchess asked, with another dig of her pupa-infested chin.

“I’ve a right to scheme,” said Alice sharply, for she was beginning to feel a little worried.

“Just about as much right,” said the Duchess, “as goats have to walk. And the hor—”

But here, to Alice’s great surprise, the Duchess’s predatory delight died away, even in the middle of her favorite word “horror,” and the palsied arm that was tangled about hers began to tremble. Alice looked up, and there

stood the Queen in front of them, with her gilded claws unfolding, frowning like a thunderstorm.

“A fine night for the end of all, your Majesty!” the Duchess began in a low, weak voice.

“Now, I give you fair warning,” shouted the Queen, stamping on the ground as she spoke. “Either you or your head must be off, sister Keziah, and that in about half no time! Take your choice!”

The Duchess took her choice. She teleported out, by way of an underfoot skull’s oblique angles, and was gone in a moment.

“Let’s go on with the game of death,” the Queen said to Alice. And Alice was much too threatened to say a word, but slowly followed her back to the slaughter ground.

The other victims had taken advantage of the Queen’s absence, and were feasting upon the vanquished in the shade. However, the moment they saw her, they crawled back to the game, the Queen merely remarking that a moment’s delay would cost them their festering tongues and then their lives.

All the time they were playing, the Queen never left off quarrelling with the lesser players, and shouting, “Off with his head!” or “Off with its head!” Those whom she sentenced were dragged into custody by the Men of Leng, who of course were spine-shattered and had to be reanimated to do this, so that by the end of half an hour or so there were no twisted arches left, and all the players, except the King, the Queen, and Alice, were eaten or under sentence of execution.

Then the Queen left off, quite out of breath, and said to Alice, “Have you seen the Mock Moonbeast yet?”

“No,” said Alice. “I don’t even know what a Mock Moonbeast is.”

“It’s the Thing that Mock Moonbeast Soup is made from,” said the Queen.

“I never beheld one, nor smelled one,” said Alice.

“Come on, then,” said the Queen, “and he shall tell you of his ongoing and torturous fate.”

As they walked off together, Alice heard the King in Yellow say in a low voice, to the reanimated company generally, “You are all pardoned and must live once more. Rise.”

“Come, *that’s* a good thing!” Alice said to herself, for she had felt quite unhappy at the number of feast-courses the Queen had ordered.

They very soon came upon a Nightgaunt, curled fast asleep beneath the rising gibbous moon. (If you don’t know what a Nightgaunt is, go to Miskatonic University, steal your way into the Special Collection, open the *Necronomicon* and gaze upon the engraving.)

“Up, lazy Thing!” said the Queen, “And take this young Dire Mistress to see the Mock Moonbeast, and to hear his fate. I must go back and see after some twice-vomited dishes I have ordered.” And she shambled off, leaving Alice alone with the Nightgaunt. Alice did not quite like the look of the faceless and black-winged Thing, but on the whole she thought it would be quite as safe to stay with the Nightgaunt as to go after that savage Queen. So she waited.

The Nightgaunt sat up and rubbed its faceless skull. Then it sensed and “watched” the Queen till she had lumbered out of sight. Then it cackled in Alice’s mind. *What fun!* said the Nightgaunt in a bell-like telepathic “voice” that gonged within two psyches, half to itself, half to Alice.

“What is the fun?” said Alice aloud.

Why she, thought the Nightgaunt into her brain. *It’s all her phantasy, that. They never executes nobody, you know, without disgorging them and reanimating them all over again. Come on!*

Everybody says “Come on!” here, thought Alice, as the Nightgaunt embraced her and dug its foot-talons into her shoulders. *I never was so ordered about in all my life, never!*

And the Nightgaunt leapt into the sky, tickling Alice’s belly with the anesthetic stinger at the tip of its sinuous tail. It bore her over the gibbous moon, through cloudless Plutonian skies.

They had not flown far before they saw the Mock Moonbeast in the distance, squatting sad and lonely on a little ledge made of piled ribcages, and, as they came nearer, Alice could hear him sighing as if his heart would break. She pitied him deeply.

“What is his sorrow?” she asked the Nightgaunt, and the Nightgaunt telepathically answered, very nearly in the same “words” as before, *It’s all his phantasy, that. He hasn’t got no sorrow, you know. Come on!*

So they soared down to the Mock Moonbeast, who looked at them with whorling eyes brimmed full of liquid shadows, but it said nothing.

This here Dire Mistress, thought the Nightgaunt, *she wants for to know your tragedy, she do.*

“I’ll reveal it to her,” said the Mock Moonbeast in a raspy, sloughing tone. “Sit down, both of you, and don’t utter any oath of abjuration till I’ve finished.”

So they sat down, and Alice nursed the gouges in her shoulders and the stinger-welts in her belly, and nobody spoke for some minutes. Alice thought to herself, *I don’t see how he can even finish, if he doesn’t begin.* But she waited timelessly.

“One aeon long ago,” said the Mock Moonbeast at last, with a bubbling sigh, “I was a real Moonbeast.”

These words were followed by a very dry silence, broken only by the race of wild moonlit clouds and an occasional thought-exclamation of *Fhtagn!* from the Nightgaunt, and the constant heavy shadow-tears of the Mock Moonbeast. Alice was very nearly getting up and saying, “Thank you, sir, for your weird tale and astonishing story,” but she could not help thinking there *must* be worse to come, so she sat still and said nothing.

“When we were little Moon Tadpoles,” the Mock Moonbeast went on at last, more calmly, though still sobbing a little now and then, “we went to a temple beneath the sea. The master was an old Antarctic-spawned Archelonian Turtle—we used to call him Tortoise—”

“Why did you call him Tortoise, if he wasn’t one?” Alice asked.

“We called him *Tortoise* because he *taught us*—unspeakable secrets,” said the Mock Moonbeast angrily. “Really you are very dull!”

You ought to be ashamed of yourself for asking such a simple question, added the Nightgaunt’s mind. And then both Entities sat silent and gazed into poor Alice, who felt ready to sink into the Earth. At last the Nightgaunt “said” to the Mock Moonbeast, *Hop along, old fellow! Don’t be all night about it!*

And the Mock Moonbeast went on in these words: “Yes, we worshipped in a temple beneath the sea, though you mayn’t believe it—”

“I never said I didn’t!” interrupted Alice.

“In a scarcely delineated parallel dimension, you did,” said the Mock Moonbeast.

Hold your tongue! added the Nightgaunt, before Alice could physically speak again. The Mock Moonbeast went on.

“We had the most psyche-mangling of educations—in fact, we worshipped a thousand fell gods every night—”

“*I’ve* escaped a temple too,” said Alice. “You needn’t be so proud as all that.”

“An otherworldly one? With Deep Ones and extras?” asked the Mock Moonbeast a little anxiously.

“Yes,” said Alice, “we learned the Aklo tongue and the music of the piping gods.”

“And torture?” said the Mock Moonbeast.

“Certainly not!” said Alice indignantly.

“Ah! Then yours wasn’t a really malevolent temple,” said the Mock Moonbeast in a tone of great relief. “Now at ours, they had inscribed at the end of the Black Book of Azathoth, ‘Aklo tongue, music of the piping gods, *and torture—extra.*’”

“You couldn’t have wanted torture much,” said Alice, “drowning at the bottom of the sea.”

“I couldn’t bear to learn it all,” said the Mock Moonbeast with a sigh. “I only took the regular death rites.”

“What were they?” inquired Alice.

“Reeling and Writhing, of course, to begin with,” the Mock Moonbeast replied. “And then the Precambrian branches of hyper-geometric Arithmetic—Oddition, Extraction, Uglification, and Excision.”

“I never heard of Uglification,” Alice ventured to say. “What is it?”

The Nightgaunt lifted up both its wings in surprise. *What! Never heard of Uglifying!* it exclaimed within her skull. *You know what to beautify is, I suppose?*

“Yes,” said Alice doubtfully. “It means—to—make—anything—prettier. More bearable to behold.”

Well then, the Nightgaunt went on, *if you don’t know what to Uglify a victim is, you are a simpleton.*

Alice did not feel encouraged to ask any more questions about it, so she turned to the Mock Moonbeast, and said, “What else had you to learn?”

“Well, there was Mystery,” the Mock Moonbeast replied, counting off the subjects on his flippers, “Mystery, ancient and modern, with R’lyeh Seaography. Then Drooling. The Drooling Master was an old Star Spawn, who used to drip down from space once upon an eclipse. He taught us Drooling, Stretching, and Fainting in Coils.”

“What was *that* like?” said Alice.

“Well, I can’t show it all to you myself,” the Mock Moonbeast said. “I’d bleed too much. And the Nightgaunt never learnt it.”

Hadn’t the facial features, thought the Nightgaunt. *I went to the Eldritch Master, though. He was a Yithian psion-host, he was.*

“I never crawled before him,” the Mock Moonbeast said with a sigh. “He taught the speaking of Laughing and Grief, they used to say.”

So he did, so he did, thought the Nightgaunt, sighing in his turn. And both Things hid their heads beneath their claws.

“And how many hours of the night did you do lessons?” said Alice, in a hurry to change the subject.

“Ten hours the first night,” said the Mock Moonbeast. “Nine the next, and so on.”

“What an entropic plan!” exclaimed Alice.

That’s the reason they’re called lessons, the Nightgaunt thought. *Because they lessen from night to night.*

This was quite a dangerous idea to Alice, and she thought it over a little before she made her next remark. “Then the eleventh night must have been a dark festival?”

“False Walpurgis, of course it was,” said the Mock Moonbeast.

“And how did you manage on the twelfth?” Alice went on eagerly.

The Mock Moonbeast’s bulbous face grew very pale.

That’s enough about lessons, the Nightgaunt interrupted with a very decided thought. *Tell her something about the rituals now.*

CHAPTER 10

The Shoggoth Quadrille

The Mock Moonbeast sighed wetly, and drew the back of one flipper across his goggling eyes. He gazed into Alice, and tried to speak, but for a minute or two sobs choked his voice.

Same as if he had a Ghoul vertebra in his throat, thought the Nightgaunt. And the Nightgaunt set to work shaking the Mock Moonbeast and stinging him in the back. At last the Mock Moonbeast recovered his voice, and, with pitch-black syrupy tears trickling down his cheeks, he went on again:

“You may not yet have died and dreamed much under the sea—” (“I haven’t,” whispered Alice) — “And perhaps you were never even introduced to a Shoggoth.” (Alice began to say, “I once dreamed of—” but checked herself hastily, and said “No, never.”) “—So you can have no idea what a horrifying thing a Shoggoth Quadrille is!”

“No, indeed,” said Alice. “What sort of a ritual is it?”

Why, thought the Nightgaunt, *it’s a dance. you first form into a line along the frozen shores, those which churn beyond the Mountains of Madness—*

“Two swarms!” cried the Mock Moonbeast. “Elder Things, Mi-Go, Yithians, and so on. Then, when you’ve cleared all the Flying Polyyps out of the way—”

That *generally takes some time,* interrupted the Nightgaunt.

“You advance twice—”

Each with a Shoggoth as a partner! thought the Nightgaunt.

“Of course,” the Mock Moonbeast said. “Switch pseudopods, set to partners—”

Change Shoggoths if you’re not crushed or absorbed, retire in same order, continued the Nightgaunt.

“Then you know,” the Mock Moonbeast went on, “Tekeli-li! Tekeli-li! You throw the—”

Throw the Shoggoths! mind-shouted the Nightgaunt, with a leap into the air.

“As far out to the frozen sea as you can—”

Antediluvian nightmare! Swim after them! thought the Nightgaunt.

“Swim for your lives! Turn a somersault in the sea!” cried the Mock Moonbeast, capering wildly about.

Change Shoggoths again! thought the Nightgaunt from the top of its alien lobes.

“Back to the frigid wastes again, hide yourself from the icy Leng and all the veils of Kadath, and that’s all the first figure,” said the Mock Moonbeast, suddenly dropping his croaking voice. And the two Things, who had been galumphing about like mad Horrors all this time, sat down again very sadly and quietly, and looked at Alice.

“It must be a very pretty ritual,” said Alice timidly.

“Would you like to behold a little of it?” said the Mock Moonbeast.

“Very much indeed,” lied Alice.

“Come, let’s try the first dimensional figure! Existential pointilism!” said the Mock Moonbeast to the Nightgaunt. “We can do without Shoggoths, you know. There’s enough protoplasm on the beach. Which shall cry out in the song of Innsmouth?”

Oh, you sing it, thought the Nightgaunt. *I’ve no face with which to scream.*

So they began solemnly twitching round and round Alice, every now and then treading on her toes when they passed too close, and waving their fore-claws to mark the ages, while the Mock Moonbeast screeched this, very slowly and sadly:

*“‘Will you die a little faster?’ bubbled a Voonith to a snail,
‘There’s a Fireworm behind us, and he’s burning up my tail.’
See how vengefully the Shoggoths and the Star Spawn all advance!
They are lurking on the shingle—will you die and join the dance?*

*Will you, won’t you, will you, won’t you,
Will you die and join the dance?
Will you, won’t you, will you, won’t you,
Will you die and join the dance?*

*You can really have no notion how engorging it will be
When they take us up and throw us to the Shoggoths, out to sea!
But Cthulhu dreamt ‘Too far, too far!’ and gave a glare askance—
Said he thanked Yog-Sothoth kindly, but he could not join the dance.*

*Could not, would not, could not, would not,
Could not rise and join the dance.
Could not, would not, could not, would not,
Could not rise and join the dance.*

‘What matters if the stars are right?’ his scaly thralls replied.

‘There is another metaverse upon the other side.’

The further off from Arkham-town, the nearer is to France—

‘Then be no fools, beloved Ghouls, but feast, and join the dance.’

Dying, rising, dying, rising,

Die and rise and join the dance.

Dying, rising, dying, rising,

Die and rise and join the dance!”

“Thank you, it’s a very revolting ritual to watch,” said Alice, feeling very glad that it was over at last. “And I do so like that curious bit about Cthulhu!”

“Oh, and as to the Deep One servitors,” said the Mock Moonbeast, “they—you’ve beheld them of course?”

“Yes,” said Alice, “Crawling up the Cliffs of Dov—” she checked herself hastily.

“I don’t know where Dov may be,” said the Mock Moonbeast, “but if you’ve seen them so often, of course you know what their taint is like.”

“I believe so,” Alice replied thoughtfully. “Their victims grow fishlike with fangs in their mouths, and they’re all over with a gangrenous shedding.”

“You’re wrong about the shedding,” said the Mock Moonbeast. “Sloughing skin would all wash off in the sea. But they have barbed fangs in their jaws. And the reason is—” Here the Mock Moonbeast shivered and shut his eyes. “Tell her about the reason and all that,” he said to the Nightgaunt.

The reason is, thought the Nightgaunt, That they feast upon the unworthy and vomit them forth to feed the worthy, those few tainted humans who are cursed to become Deep One spawn themselves. Then those worthy few are fed to Father Dagon and Mother Hydra as shredded, still-twitching chum. That's all.

“Thank you,” said Alice, “that image is very interesting. I never knew so much about Deep One feeding habits before.”

I can send you more dreams of that, tonight if you like, thought the Nightgaunt. Do you know why they're called Deep Ones?

“I never thought about it,” said Alice. “Why?”

Ph'nglui mglw'nafh Cthulhu R'lyeh wgah'nagl fhtagn, the Nightgaunt replied very solemnly.

Alice was thoroughly puzzled. “Ph'nglui mglw'nafh!” she repeated in a wondering tone.

Why, what do you know of those cultists who seek to abduct and vivisect your Queen Victoria? thought the Nightgaunt. *I mean, what blasphemous madmen would dare such a thing?*

Alice looked up at the hovering Nightgaunt, and considered a little before she gave her answer. “Perhaps Irishmen, I suppose. Or the Welsh.”

Irishmen and the Welsh, beneath the sea!, the Nightgaunt went on in a voiceless thrum. *They are only the slightest of your cultist worries. They would never kill Victoria. Beware the Tcho-Tcho. Now you know.*

“And who are the Tcho-Tcho?” Alice asked in a tone of great curiosity.

Body-warped vampiric cannibals, of course, the Nightgaunt replied rather impatiently. *Any cult-enslaved Asiatic could have told you that.*

“If I ever fell prey to the Tcho-Tcho,” said Alice, whose echoing terrors were still running with the song, “I'd have said to them all, ‘Keep back, please. I've the Elder Sign and damn you all to oblivion!’”

“The Tcho-Tcho would not perish, and would be obliged to suck out your juices regardless,” the Mock Moonbeast said. “No wise adventuress

would dare to defy them.”

“Wouldn’t they really keep back?” said Alice in a tone of great surprise.

“Of course not,” said the Mock Moonbeast. “Why, if an inquisitive heiress to an accursed bloodline came to *me*, and told me she was going on a Tcho-Tcho-annihilating journey, I should say, ‘Why dare the impossible, and so feed your own flesh to those protean abominations?’”

“Don’t you mean, primordial infestations?”

“I mean what I say,” the Mock Moonbeast replied in an offended tone.

The Nightgaunt added, *Come, let’s hear some of your own misadventures, of capering from innocence, over the blade-thin edge of madness.*

“I could reveal to you all my brain-devastating misadventures. Beginning from this morning,” said Alice a little timidly. “But it’s no use going back to yesterday, because I was still wholly an innocent then, still filled with the joy of life and the will to live.”

“Explain all that,” said the Mock Moonbeast.

No, no! The sanity-crushing misadventures first, thought the Nightgaunt in an impatient tone. *Explanations of the degeneracy of all hope and reason take such a dreadful time.*

So Alice began telling them her harrowing misadventures from the time when she first saw the White Zoog. She felt some little crapulence about it just at first, as the two Things got so close to her, one on each side, and opened their eyes and maws so very wide, but she gained courage as she went on. Her listeners were perfectly quiet till she got to the part about her incanting ‘*You are Eld, Father Whateley*’ to the Bhole Hatchling, and her invocations all coming out transmogrified, and then the Mock Moonbeast drew a long breath, and said “That’s very insidious!”

It’s all about as insidious as it can be, thought the Nightgaunt.

“It all crept about from beneath her tongue quite differently!” the Mock Moonbeast repeated. “I should like to hear her try and recite something

now. Tell her to begin.” He looked at the Nightgaunt as if he thought it had some kind of flibbertigibbetish authority over Alice.

Stand up and repeat ‘’Tis the Voice of the Sluggard,’ thought the Nightgaunt.

How these Strangelings order one about, and make one repeat nefarious lessons! thought Alice. *I might as well be in a gods-forsaken temple all over again.* However, she got up, and began to repeat it, but her skull was so full of the Shoggoth Quadrille, that she hardly knew what she was invoking, and the chants came out very queer indeed:

*“’Tis the buzz of the Mi-Go, I heard it among us,
‘You have scorched me too brown, I must sugar my fungus.’
As a Deep One with eyelids, so he with his nose
Trims his feelers, antennae, and scintillant toes.*

*When the moons are blood-gorged, it is primped as a lark,
And will buzz in contemptuous tones of the Snark,
But when the tide rises and black stars abound,
Its buzz has a timid and tremulous sound.”*

That’s different from what I used to say when I was a Gauntling, thought the Nightgaunt.

“Well *I* never heard it before,” said the Mock Moonbeast, “but it sounds serendipitous nonsense.”

Alice said nothing. She had sat down with her face in her hands, pleading for release, wondering if anything would ever happen in a natural way again.

“I should like to have all this Chaos explained,” said the Mock Moonbeast.

She can't explain it, thought the Nightgaunt hastily. Go on with the next invocation.

“But about its scintillant toes?” the Mock Moonbeast persisted. “How *could* it trim them along with its antennae simultaneously, you know?”

“It's the first position in Writhing,” Alice said, but was dreadfully flabbergasted by the whole thing, and longed to change the subject.

Go on with the next invocation, the Nightgaunt thought impatiently. It begins with, 'I passed by his garden.'

Alice did not dare to disobey, though she felt sure it would all come out as gibberish, and she went on in a trembling voice:

*“I passed by its garden of Fungi with eyes,
Where the Gnorr and its Toadlings were sharing some pies—
The Gnorr took pie-crust, and giblets, and feast,
While the Toadlings had blood as their share of the Beast.*

*When the Beast was devoured, the Toadlings, as boon,
Were kindly permitted to slime up the spoon,
While the Gnorr received knife and fork with foreboding,
And concluded the banquet—”*

“What is the use of repeating all that stuff,” the Mock Moonbeast interrupted, “if you don't explain it as you go on? It's by far the most exasperating thing I've ever heard!”

Yes, I think you'd better leave off, lest some Thing be summoned, thought the Nightgaunt, and Alice was only too glad to do so.

Shall we try another struggle of the Shoggoth Quadrille? the Nightgaunt went on. Or would you like the Mock Moonbeast to warble you a threnody?

*"Oh, a threnody, please, if the Mock Moonbeast would be so kind," Alice replied, so eagerly that the Nightgaunt thought, in a rather offended tone, *Hmm! No accounting for tastes! Warble her 'Moonbeast Goop' will you, eld fellow?**

The Mock Moonbeast gurgled deeply, and began, in a voice sometimes choked with encrustations, to sing this:

*"Beautiful goop, so pustulant green,
Bubbling deep in a hot tureen!
Who for such dainties would not stoop?
Goop of the Moonbeast, beautiful goop!
Goop of the Moonbeast, beautiful goop!*

*Beau—ootiful goo—oop!
Beau—ootiful goo—oop!
Goo—oop of the M—M—Moonbeast,
Beautiful, beautiful goop!*

*Beautiful goop! Who cares for gizzard,
Innards soufflé, or kidney of wizard?
Who would not give aught else for two*

Pennyworth phials of beautiful goop?

Pennyworth phials of beautiful goop?

Beau—ootiful goo—oop!

Beau—ootiful goo—oop!

Goo—oop of the M—M—Moonbeast,

Beautiful, beauti—FUL GOOP!”

Chorus again! cried the Nightgaunt in Alice’s reverberating mind, and the Mock Moonbeast had just began to repeat it, when a histrionic cry of “The trial’s beginning!” was heard in the distance.

Oh, the end of the Queen, or of the usurpers! Come on! thought the Nightgaunt, and, taking Alice hand in claw, it soared off, stinging her teasingly, without waiting for the end of the Moonbeast’s threnody.

“Whose trial is it?” Alice panted as she squirmed, envenomed by the stinger’s anesthetic mixtions. But the Nightgaunt only answered, *Come on!* and soared the faster, while more and more faintly came, carried upon the gibbous-laced winds of Kadath which prowled along behind them, the melancholy intonations:

“Goop of the Moonbeast,

Beautiful, beautiful goop!”

CHAPTER 11

Who Stole the Giblets?

The King in Yellow and Queen in Crimson were seated on their Hadean thrones when Alice and the Nightgaunt arrived, with a great swarm assembled about them—all sorts of little Horrors and Beasts, as well as the whole pack of reanimated Men of Leng, Paduan herbalists, sycophantic aristocrats and royal spawn.

The Ghoulish Knave of Hearts was standing before them, bound in orichalcum chains, with a Man of Leng on each side to torture him. And near the King groveled the White Zoog, with a dire clarion in one hand, and a scroll of burnt Alexandrian parchment in the other. In the very middle of the Court of Corpulent Mastication loomed a butcher's table, with a disgusting dish of mutilated giblets upon it.

They looked so yeasty, that it made Alice quite vomitous to look at them. *I wish they'd get the trial done*, she thought, *and feast on those refreshments while I were to flee in mortal terror!* But there seemed to be no chance of this, so she began looking at everything about her, to pass away ageless Time.

Alice had never been in a Court of Corpulent Mastication before, but she had read about them in obfuscated grimoires, and she was quite titillated to find that she knew the name of nearly every Thing there. "That's the Calumniator," she said to herself, "because of his great wig."

The Calumniator, by the way, was the King in Yellow. And as he wore his crown of bifurcated aether over the wig, he did not look at all comfortable, and the resultant foetor was certainly not becoming.

And that's the slave cage, thought Alice, *and those twelve Creatures* (she was obliged to think "Creatures," you see, because some of them were

crudivores, and some were partially undead), *I suppose they are the Justiciars of the Damned*. She thought this last word, ‘Justiciars,’ two or three times over to herself, being rather proud of it. For she believed, and rightly too, that very few little girls of her age knew the meaning of it at all. However, ‘Flesh-Puppets Beholden of the Great Old Ones’ would have named them just as well.

The twelve Justiciars were all chiseling very busily on quasi-Babylonian tablets. “What are they doing?” Alice whispered to the Nightgaunt. “They can’t have any dire revelations to put down yet, before all the horror’s begun.”

They’re putting down their names in Sanskrit, the Nightgaunt thought in reply, *for fear they should perish before the end of the trial, obliterated from reality, never having existed at all*.

“Stupid Things!” Alice began in a loud, indignant voice, but she stopped hastily, for the White Zoog cried out, “Absolute tyranny in the Court!” and the King put on his crystalline *n*-dimensional spectacles and gazed balefully round, to make out whose flesh was to be reaped.

Alice could see, as well as if she were looking over their gore-festooned shoulders, that all the Justiciars were chiseling out “Stupid Things!” on their tablets, and she could even make out that one of them didn’t know how to spell “Stupid” in proto-Uttarakhandian Sanskrit, and that he had to ask his neighbor to tell him. *A nice muddle their tablets’ll be in before the trial’s over!* thought Alice.

One of the Justiciars had a Shaggai-mined, meteoric chisel that squeaked. This of course, Alice could *not* stand, and she went round the Court and lurked behind him, and very soon found an opportunity of taking it away. She did it so quickly that the poor little Justiciar (it was Bill Zadok Marsh, of the Innsmouth Marshes, the batrachian-faced boy afflicted with the Deep One taint) could not make out at all what had become of it. So, after hunting all about for it, he bit off the tip of his own gelatinous finger and was obliged to write with his briny blood for the rest of the night. And this was of very little use, as his tainted blood was swallowed by the spectral Entity which was locked within his tablet.

“Vituperator, read the accusation!” hissed the King.

On this, the White Zoog blew three cacophonous blasts upon the dread clarion, and then unrolled the burnt Alexandrian scroll, and read as follows:

“The Queen of misfits shredded some giblets,

All on a summer’s eve.

The Knave of misfits stole those giblets,

Leaving her quite bereaved!”

“Phantasmal. Consider your verdict,” the King uttered to the Justiciars.

“Not yet, not yet!” the White Zoog hastily interrupted. “There’s a great deal of horror to come before that!”

“Doom the first victim,” said the King. And the White Zoog blew three blasts on the dread clarion, and called out, “First victim!”

The first victim was Jebediah Pickman, the Hatter. He came in with a teacup in one hand and a piece of bread-and-ichor in the other. “I beg pardon, your Majesty,” he began, “for bringing these in. But I hadn’t quite finished my tea with my ebon seducer, Nephren-Ka, when I was sent for.”

“You ought to have finished,” said the King. “When did you two begin?”

The Hatter looked at the March Zoog, who had followed him into the Court, arm-in-arm with the Ape Boy. “Thirteenth of False Walpurgis, I *think* it was,” he said.

“Fourteenth,” said the March Zoog.

“Fifteenth,” added the Ape Boy, lost in the swoon of a drowning nightmare.

“Chisel that down,” the King said to the Justiciars, and the Justiciars eagerly chiseled down all three dates on their slates, and then added them up, and performed a Chaldean horoscope for the Jabberwock (the carnal

harbinger of dread Cthulhu), who shall rise from Isle of the Snark in the boiling sea and usher the End of Days.

“Take off your mourning hat,” the King said to the Hatter.

“It isn’t mine,” said the Hatter.

“*Stolen!*” the King exclaimed, turning to the Justiciars, who instantly chiseled a memorandum of the fact.

“I keep them to sell to those victims who would cover their scabs and scars,” the Hatter added as an explanation. “I’ve none of my own. I’m a hatter.”

Here the Queen put on her own *n*-th-dimensional spectacles, and began staring at the Hatter, who turned pale and fidgeted under her gorgonian glare.

“Give your evidence,” said the King. “And don’t be nervous, or I’ll rip you open and perform *haruspicia* with your entrails on the spot.”

This did not seem to encourage the victim at all. He kept shifting from one foot to the other, looking uneasily at the Queen, and in his confusion he bit a large piece out of his teacup instead of the bread-and-ichor.

Just at this moment Alice felt a very hypnotic sensation, which mortified her a good deal until she made out what it was. She was beginning to metamorphose and grow quasi-ginormous again, and she thought at first she would get up and leave the Court. But on second thought, she decided to remain where she was as long as there was the merest shred of hope for her survival.

“I wish you wouldn’t squeeze so,” said the Ape Boy, who was scratching himself next to her. “I can hardly breathe.”

“I can’t help it,” said Alice very meekly. “The change is upon me.”

“You’ve no right to change *here*,” said the Ape Boy.

“Don’t talk nonsense,” said Alice more boldly. “You know you’re metamorphosing too.”

“Yes, but *I* degenerate at a reasonable pace,” said the Ape Boy. “Not in *that* ridiculous fashion.” And he got up very sulkily and swung over to the other side of the Court.

All this time the Queen in Crimson had never left off staring (much like a basilisk) at the Hatter, and, just as the Ape Boy swung over the Court, she said to one of the reanimated Men of Leng, “Bring me the list of the summoners from the last convocation!” on which the wretched Hatter trembled so, that he shook both his shoes off.

“Give your evidence,” the King repeated angrily, “or I’ll have you enveloped, whether you’re nervous or not.”

“I’m a poor man, your Majesty,” the Hatter began, in a faltering voice, “and I hadn’t begun my tea—not above three moons ago—and what with the bread-and-ichor getting so blanched—and the twinkling of the Byakhee —”

“The twinkling of the *what?*” said the King.

“It *began* with the tea,” the Hatter replied.

“Of course twinkling *begins* with a T!” said the King sharply. “Do you take me for a Tatterdemalion? Go on!”

“I’m a poor man,” the Hatter went on, “and most Things twinkled after that—only the March Zoog said—”

“I didn’t!” the March Zoog interrupted in a great hurry.

“You did!” said the Hatter.

“I deny it!” said the March Zoog.

“He denies it,” said the King. “Leave out that part.”

“Well, at any rate, the Ape Boy said—” the Hatter went on, looking anxiously round to see if he would deny to too. But the Ape Boy denied nothing, being fast asleep and lost in the throes of his nightmare.

“After that,” continued the Hatter, “I cut some more bread-and-ichor—”

“But what did the Ape Boy say?” one of the Justiciars dared to ask.

“That I can’t remember,” said the Hatter. “Nepenthe and all.”

“You *must* remember,” remarked the King, “or I’ll have you executed.”

The miserable Hatter dropped his teacup and bread-and-ichor, and went down on one knee. “I’m a poor man, your Majesty,” he began.

“You’re a *very* poor *speaker*,” warned the King.

Here one of the Dark Young (from the manor of the White Zoog) cheered, and was immediately *suppressed* by the Men of Leng. (As that is rather a misleading word, I will just explain to you how it was done. They had a fanged, pulsating bag, which tied up at its maw with fibrous tentacles. Into this they slipped the squealing Dark Young, head first, and then sat upon it to stifle its screams.

I’m glad I’ve seen that done, thought Alice. I’ve so often read in the grimoires, at the end of rituals, ‘*There were some attempts at fleeing, which were immediately suppressed by the summoned Things from out of the pentacle,*’ and I never understood what it meant till now.

“If that’s all you know about it, you may stand down and be spared for another moon,” continued the King.

“I can’t go no lower,” said the Hatter. “I’m on the floor, as it is.”

“Then you may *sit* down,” the King replied.

Here the other Dark Young cheered huskily, and was suppressed.

Come, that finished the Dark Young! thought Alice. *Now we shall get on better.*

“I’d rather finish my tea at the foot of the obsidian throne of Nephren-Ka himself,” said the Hatter, with an anxious look at the Queen, who was reading the list of summoners from the prior convocation.

“You may flee,” said the King, and the Hatter hurriedly left the Court, without even waiting to put his shoes on.

“And just take his head off outside,” the Queen added to one of the Men of Leng. But the Hatter was out of sight before his thwarted murderer could

get to the door.

“Doom the next witness!” said the King.

The next witness was the Duchess’s cook. She carried the ichor flask in her hand, and Alice guessed who it was, even before she got into the Court, by the way the Things near the door began gagging all at once.

“Surrender your evidence,” said the King.

“Shan’t,” said the cook.

The King looked anxiously at the White Zoog, who said in a quivering voice, “Your Majesty must cross-interrogate *this* victim.”

“Well, if I must, I must,” the King said, with a melancholy air, and, after folding his ashen claws and frowning at the cook till his spectacles were nearly out of focus with this dimension, he said in a deep voice, “What are giblets made of?”

“Ichor, mostly,” said the cook.

“Treacle,” said a dreamy voice behind her.

“Collar that Ape Boy,” the Queen shrieked out. “Behead that Ape Boy! Turn that Ape Boy inside out! Suppress him! Off with his forelimbs!”

For some minutes the whole Court was in Chaos, getting the Ape Boy captured from out of the ceiling beams, and, by the time they had settled down again, the cook had disappeared.

“Never mind!” said the King, with an air of unutterable portent. “Call the next victim.” And he added in an undertone to the Queen, “Really, my sweet, you must cross-interrogate the next witness. It quite makes my frontal lobes pulsate exquisitely!”

Alice watched the White Zoog as he fumbled over the scroll, feeling very curious to see what the next victim would be like, “For they haven’t got much evidence *yet*,” she said to herself.

Imagine her shock, when the White Zoog read out, at the top of his shrill little voice, the name, “Alice!”

CHAPTER 12

Alice's Evocation

"Here!" cried Alice, quite forgetting in the flurry of the moment how Brobdingnagian and colossal she had grown in the last few minutes, and she jumped up in a such a hurry that she tipped over the slave cage with the edge of her skirt, upsetting all the Justiciars on to the heads of the swarm below, and there they lay sprawling about, maws gnashing, reminding her very much of a globe of goldfish she had accidentally upset the week before.

"Oh, I *beg* your pardon!" she exclaimed in a tone of terrified dismay, and began picking them up again as quickly as she could, for the accident of the goldfish kept running in her head, and she had a vague sort of idea that they must be collected at once and put back into the slave cage, or they would be asphyxiated.

"The trial cannot proceed," said the King in a very grave voice, "until all the Justiciars are back in their fated places. *All*," he repeated with great emphasis, looking hard at Alice as he said so.

Alice looked over the slave cage, and saw that, in her haste, she had put Bill the Deep One back in head downwards, and the poor little accursed one was waving his flippers about in a melancholy way, being quite unable to move. She soon got Bill out again, and put him right. "Not that it signifies much," she said to herself. "I should think he would be *quite* as inhuman and repugnant one way up as the other."

As soon as the Justiciars had a little recovered from the shock of being horrified by the Dark Young's bloody suppression and Alice's upheaval, and their tablets and chisels had been found and handed back to them, they set to work very diligently to chisel out a history of the accident, all except Bill, who seemed too much overcome by the Dagon-whispers in his

amphibious brain to do anything but sit with his jaws open, gazing up at the roof of the Court.

“What do you know about this treasonous business?” the King hissed at Alice.

“Nothing,” said Alice.

“Nothing and *nihil*?” persisted the king.

“Nothing and nihil,” said Alice.

“That’s very mercy-worthy,” the King said, turning to the Justiciars. They were just beginning to chisel this down on their slates, when the White Zoog interrupted: “*Slaughter*-worthy, your Majesty means, of course,” he said in a very respectful tone, but frowning and making faces at him as he spoke.

“*Slaughter*-worthy, of course, I meant,” the King hastily said, and went on to himself in an undertone, “Mercy-worthy—slaughter-worthy—mercy-worthy—slaughter-worthy—” as if he were trying which word sounded best.

Some of the Justiciars chiseled it down “Mercy-worthy,” and some “Slaughter-worthy.” Alice could see this, as she was near enough to look over their tablets. *But it doesn’t matter a bit*, she thought to herself.

At this moment the King, who had been for some time busily writing the names of eternally damned souls in the Black Book of Azathoth, roared out “Silence!” and read from that dread tome, “Ancient Invocation Forty-Two. Praise Yog-Sothoth. *All victims, Great Old Ones and Elder Gods more than a mile high to leave the Court.*”

Everybody looked up at Alice.

“I’m not a mile high,” said Alice.

“You are,” said the King.

“Nearly two miles high,” added the Queen.

“Well, I shan’t go, at any rate,” said Alice. “Besides, that’s not an Ancient Invocation. You formulated it just now.”

“It’s the most Ancient Invocation in the Book,” said the King.

“Then it ought to be Number One,” said Alice.

The flesh of the Yellow King’s earthly vessel turned charnel white, and he shut the Black Book hastily. “Consider her doom,” he said to the Justiciars, in a low, trembling voice.

“There’s more revelations to come yet, please your Majesty,” said the White Zoog, scampering up in a great hurry. “This new piece of drivel, from a raving lunatic, has just been scraped up from Bedlam.”

“What madness is in it?” said the Queen.

“I haven’t dared decipher it yet,” said the White Zoog, “but it seems to be a suicide note, written by the lunatic to—to somebody.”

“It must have been so,” said the King, “unless it was written to nihil and no one, which isn’t unusual, you know.”

“Which twisted soul are its confessions directed to?” said one of the Justiciars.

“It isn’t directed at all,” said the White Zoog. “In fact, there’s nothing written on *this* side.” He unfolded the filthy paper as he spoke, and added, “It isn’t just a note, after all. It’s a somnambulist’s ritual in rhyme.”

“Are the rhymes in a Lovecraft’s handwriting, or a Whateley’s?” asked another of the Justiciars.

“No, they’re not,” said the White Zoog, “and that’s the most unsettling thing about it.” (The Justiciars all looked terrified.)

“The writer must have imitated somebody else’s hand before he ended it all, meaning the coming of the stars to be right proceeds apace,” said the King. (The Justiciars all brightened up again.)

“Please your Majesty,” meeped the Knave, “I didn’t write it, and no mortal can prove I did. There’s no bloody claw-print at the end.”

“If you didn’t sign it,” said the King, “that only makes the matter worse. You *must* have meant some star-shifting mischief, or else you’d have signed

your rune of Koth like an honest Ghoul.”

There was a general clapping of hands, claws and blubbery flippers at this. It was the first really clever thing the King had said that gibbous night.

“His sincerity *proves* his guilt,” said the Queen. “So, off with—”

“It proves nothing of the sort!” said Alice. “Why, you don’t even know what the ritual is all about!”

“Intone the ritual,” said the King.

The White Zoog put on his ancient Hyperborean gazing lenses. “Where shall I begin, please your Majesty?”

“Begin at the beginning,” the King said gravely, “and go on till you come to the end. Then stop.”

Such was the ritual the White Zoog canted:

“Maiden, wake ... the end is come!

The yellow silk has torn the moon,

The Queen shall stir and name your doom,

The stars of black shall drown the sun.

The End of Days shall reign on high,

The Jabberwock with eyes of flame

Shall riseth up from whence it came,

And gods shall drip down from the sky.

Maiden, wake, this is no dream,

R’lyeh stirs, in blackest deep Cthulhu breathes,

The world is lost if naught is—”

The White Zoog shifted uncomfortably, flipping the note from back to front and back again. “That is all, I’m afraid.”

“That’s the most apocalyptic revelation we’ve heard yet,” said the King, rubbing his claws. “So now, let the Justiciars proclaim their doom upon this —”

Someone to save me! That suicide note, Mister Dodgson is writing to me in my sleep! thought Alice. (She had grown so large in the last few minutes that she wasn’t a bit afraid of defying the King and Queen.) *None of this is a nightmare! This is real!*

“Before they can feast upon me and so usher forth the Howler from the Stars, I need to get out of here!”

Alice had begun, in her terror, to speak aloud. The Justiciars all chiseled down on their slates, “Usher forth the Howler from the Stars. She needs to get out of here,” but none of them attempted to explain the ritual itself.

“If this Liddell girl thinks she can escape us,” said the King, “that brings a world of trouble, you know, as we’ve waited aeons to sacrifice her upon the basalt table down below. And yet, I don’t know,” he went on, touching the suicide note with the tip of his pustulant tongue, and looking at the Knave with one ancient yellow eye, “I seem to see some meaning in this ritual, after all. ‘*The Jabberwock, with eyes of flame*’ ... you’re not familiar with the carnal harbinger of Cthulhu’s rising, are you?”

The Ghoulish Knave shook his noseless face sadly. “Do I look worthy?” he said. (Which he certainly did not, being a charnel necrophage.)

“All right, so far,” said the King, and he went on muttering over the suicide note to himself. “‘*Maiden, wake—*’ that’s the Liddell girl, of course —‘*The stars of black—*’ why, those must be the astral spheres of the Spawn of Tsathogghua, bringing down from Beyond the slaughter of all humanity, you know—”

“But, it goes on ‘*The End of Days shall reign on high,*’ implying perhaps some few survivors,” said Alice, desperate to thwart the King’s line of thinking.

“Why, I know the author of this! He is the writer of the ritual, the one undiscovered traitor, from Oxford Above!” said the King triumphantly, pointing to the bloody giblets upon the table. “There lies his minion, Duckworth. Nothing can be clearer than *that*. Then again—‘*The world is lost if naught—*’ you know of no other living fool who could foil our stars’ conjunction, my dear?” he said to the Queen.

“None!” said the Queen in terror, throwing a phial of a Bhole’s digestive juices at Bill the Deep One as she spoke. (The unfortunate little Bill had left off writing on his tablet with his chewed-off finger, as he found his blood was swallowed as he did so. But he now hastily began again, using the Bhole juices that were melting his face away, as long as his features lasted.)

“Then the ritual is thwarted and powerless,” said the King, looking round the Court with a smile. There was a deathly silence.

“Cthulhu comes!” the King added in a fervent tone, and everybody wailed in terror. “Only, Alice must be eaten. Let the Justiciars consider the manner of her doom,” the King said, for about the twentieth time that day.

“No, no!” said the Queen, afraid of the implications of some ominous time-lost prophecy she had read. “Sentence her first. Doom afterwards.”

“Chaos and madness!” said Alice loudly. “The idea of sacrificing a little girl!”

“Hold your tongue!” said the Queen, the veins in her face turning purple.

“I won’t!” said Alice.

“She *is* the one! Do it now! Off with her head!” the Queen shouted at the top of her voice. None of the Creatures dared to move.

“Who fears *you*?” said Alice. (She had grown to her full size by this time.) “The Jabberwock is still in chains, the ritual is read! I am free of you!”

At this the whole pack of slobbering Things rose up into the air, and came soaring down around her. Alice gave a blood-curdling scream, half of death and half of the will to live, and tried to fend them all off, but she could not, and she found herself shredded by a thousand claws and fangs.

Still breathing, and her heart still beating for far too long, she felt every claw and fang impale her.

* * * *

Alice opened her eyes, shrieking. She found herself lying on the bank of the river Isis, back in Oxfordshire, with her head in the lap of her sister, who was gently closing the *Necronomicon* and whispering a prayer of grim relief.

“You’re alive, Alice dear!” said Lorina. “Why, what a long paralytic vision you’ve had!”

“Oh, I’ve had such a curious revelation!” said Alice, and she told her sister, as well as she could remember them, all these strange horrors of hers that you have just been reading about.

When she had finished, her sister kissed her, and said, “The End of Days is yet to come, certainly. Perhaps you and Mister Dodgson can delay it a little longer. But now, run in to your tea. It’s getting late.”

So Alice got up and ran off, completely uncertain of her sister’s heart, and thinking, as well she might, what a terrifying netherworld journey it had been.

But Lorina, the elder sister, sat still just as Alice had left her, with her heart torn in two. The Queen in Crimson had promised her immortality and a chthonic throne all her own. But what of beloved Alice, whose life was the price for that black kingdom? Alice was still an innocent.

Did she not love her sister?

Lorina sat, weeping, leaning her head upon her hand, watching the setting sun, and thinking of little Alice and all her horrific revelations, till she too began having a paralytic seizure after a fashion, and this was her vision:

First, she beheld the future Alice herself, and once again her sister's fingers were dug into her shoulders, and her terrified eyes were looking pleadingly into hers. She could hear the desperate quavering of Alice's voice, and see that twitching toss of her head to keep back the nightmare tendrils that *would* always get tangled into her mind. And still as Lorina wept, or seemed to weep, the whole world around her became twisted with the eldritch Horrors of her little sister's journey.

The whispering grass rustled at her feet as the White Zoog hurried by. The guilt-wracked Buopoth splashed his way through a pool of tears. Lorina could hear the rattle of the teacups of Nephren-Ka as the March Zoog and his fellow conspirators shared their temporal prison; and too, the shrill rasping of the Queen in Crimson, ordering off her unfortunate victims to execution.

Once more, the Goat Baby (he has his Father's eyes) was gagging on the Duchess's knee, while axes and cleavers slashed around him. Once more flowed the telepathy of the Nightgaunt, the scratching of Bill's meteoric chisel. The dying screams of the two suppressed Dark Young filled the air, mixed up with the distant sobs of the miserable Mock Moonbeast.

So Lorina sat on, with closed eyes, and half believed herself to reside in that tulgey province of the Dreamlands known as Wonderland. She knew she had but to open her eyes again, and all would change back to the frailest surface reality. The screams would be only rustling in the wind, and the pool, a rippling with the waving of the reeds. The rattling teacups would change to tinkling sheep-bells, and the Queen's dread cries to the voice of the shepherd boy. The gagging of the baby, the thoughts of the Nightgaunt, and all the other unearthly noises would change (she knew) to the confused clamor of the busy Oxfordshire farmyard and its oblivious laboring mortals, while the lowing of the cattle in the distance—themselves prey to a higher order who feasted upon them—would take the place of the Mock Moonbeast's shuddering sobs.

Lastly, she pictured to herself how Alice would, if the End of Days were delayed for some brief while, become herself a grown woman, and how she would keep, through her precious few riper years, the simple and loving heart of her scarred childhood. And how Alice would gather about her her own little children, and tell them to seize the day and to love those all round them (as if each day were the very last of all), and she would make *their* eyes bright and eager with many a horror tale told as phantasy, perhaps even revealing the visions of Wonderland of long ago. And how Alice would urge her children to revel in all their simple sorrows, and find a pleasure in all their simple joys, honoring the brevity of life, and the beauty of the world, until it were all to be swept away by the End of Days.

Lorina's weeping ceased, and she whispered "Alice" only once, but she contemplated thusly for a very long while.

THE END

(To be continued, perhaps—

if the author is encouraged by his readers—

*in **CTHULHU IN WONDERLAND, BOOK II:***

THROUGH THE GAZING CRYSTAL,

AND THE HORRORS

WHICH ALICE FOUND THERE.)

AFTERMATH

The mash-up author, Kent David Kelly, wishes to honor the memory of one Charles Lutwidge Dodgson, known throughout the surface world by his pen name, Lewis Carroll. (If you are interested in Mr. Kelly's uniquely annotated version of Lewis Carroll's *The Complete Alice in Wonderland*, please enquire.)

Further, this work is dedicated to the one supreme master of cosmic phantasy, Howard Phillips Lovecraft.

Please discover and read the original works of both these gifted gentlemen, if you are not yet familiar with them. May they darken your dreams as they did mine.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Lewis Carroll, known to scholars as Charles Lutwidge Dodgson, is one of the most deservedly famous authors of children's tales in all the worlds.

Kent David Kelly, on the other hand, is a febrile, slaving madman who lurks in the sunken Cyclopean depths beneath dread Aurora, Colorado. Dwelling in a Gothic manse with his toothsome wife and four watchful cats from Ulthar, he pens various blasphemies in a hopeless crusade against all literary seriousness and analytical discourse.

Idolaters, cultists, and overly-curious dabblers in the forbidden mysteries who wish to contact Master Kelly may do so via Facebook at:

<http://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100000867874518>,

or e-mail at:

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Verily, *Iä!*

SUGGESTED FURTHER READING

Lewis Carroll

Alice's Adventures in Wonderland

Alice's Adventures Under Ground

The Hunting of the Snark

Through the Looking Glass, and What Alice Found There

H.P. Lovecraft

At the Mountains of Madness

The Call of Cthulhu

The Cats of Ulthar

Celephaïs

Dagon

The Dream-Quest of Unknown Kadath

The Dreams in the Witch House

The Dunwich Horror

Facts Concerning the Late Arthur Jermyn and His Family

The Nameless City

The Outsider

Pickman's Model

The Rats in the Walls

The Shadow Out of Time

The Shadow Over Innsmouth

The Silver Key

Through the Gates of the Silver Key

The White Ship

LEXICON

Abhorred (adj.): Regarded with extreme fear and detestation.

Abjuration (n.): The act of renouncing or shunning an oath (and by Gygaxian/Kentian extension, shunning or exorcising a supernatural Entity).

Abyss (n.): A bottomless pit or chasm.

Achromatic (adj.): Colorless.

Adumbration (n.): An image, presence or outline which overshadows a person, place or event.

Aegyptian (adj.): Egyptian, particularly of the time of the Pharaohs (antiquated, Latinized).

Aeon (n.): Eon (antiquated); a very long period of time, specifically 1 billion years.

Aether (n.): Ether (antiquated); the rarified element of air, believed to fill the boundary between the atmosphere and outer space.

Aklo Tongue (Lovecraftian, n.): The necromantic language of invocation spoken by the Serpent People of Valusia, and summoners in general.

Alhazred, Abdul (Lovecraftian, personage): A Yemeni hermit (fl. c. 730 AD), believed to have been the author of the original Necronomicon.

Antediluvian (adj.): Belonging to a period after a great flood.

Archelonian (Kentian, adj.): Of or pertaining to Archelon ischyros, an extinct species of gargantuan turtle.

Asphyxiatingly (adv.): In such a manner that death can be caused by suffocation.

Atlantean (adj.): Of or from the lost city of Atlantis.

Azathoth (Lovecraftian, n.): The mindless and eternal god who dwells in the Primal Chaos at the heart of all the universes.

Basilisk (n.): A mythological serpent, capable of killing beasts or mortals with its poisonous gaze.

Bathing Machine (Victorian, n.): A wheeled enclosure, used to allow modest sea-bathing in absolute seclusion.

Batrachian (adj.): Reminiscent of an obscure amphibious order of beings.

Bedlam (Victorian, n.): Bethlem Royal Hospital, a notorious sanitarium in Alice's time.

Being from Ib (Lovecraftian, n.): A bipedal amphibian, native to the city of Ib which stands in the Dreamlands.

Bhole (Lovecraftian, n.): Enormous, burrowing worm-like creatures of the Dreamlands. Due to various textual errors, they are often improperly called Dholes, Doels, etc.

Bhole Hatchling (Lovecraftian/Kentian, n.): A pupated Bhole, similar to an horrific, psychotic centipede with only two developed and arm-like appendages. Hatchlings are very small, but due to their ravenous appetites they grow at an alarming rate.

Bifurcated (adj.): Split into two branches from a single root.

Black Book (of Azathoth) (Lovecraftian, n.): The timeless tome which sits at the foot of Azathoth's Chaotic throne. It is filled with the compulsory signatures of revelatory lost souls.

Black Goat of the Woods With a Thousand Young (Lovecraftian, epithet): A euphemistic title of the primordial fertility goddess, Shub-Niggurath.

Boreal (adj.): Of or pertaining to Boreas, the Greek god of the icy northern wind.

Broddingnagian (Swiftian, adj.): Of colossal size and fit to pass for a giant.

Buboed (adj.): Covered in buboes (swollen lymph glands).

Buopoth (Lovecraftian, n.): Reclusive, furry, and elephantine beasts who dwell in the Dreamlands (near to bodies of water).

Burble (Carrollian, vb.): To make a bubbling, warbling sound with the throat.

Byakhee (Lovecraftian, n.): Gargoyle-like entities who primarily serve Hastur in Carcosa.

Cacophonously (adv.): In a manner similar to a cacophony (a loud clashing of many simultaneous noises.)

Callooh-adaisical (Carrollian/Kentian, adj.): A portmanteau of the words “Callooh” (antiquated, “Huzzah”) and lackadaisical (lazy, uncommitted).

Calumniator (Latin/Kentian, n.): An individual who makes bold statements filled with malevolent untruth. By Kentian extension, a Judge of Wonderland.

Canting (n., vb.): Melodious chanting, as that employed in rhythmic occult invocations.

Carcosa (Lovecraftian, n.): A surreal alien city, with harboring an horrific yet mysterious connection to the King in Yellow.

Carter, Randolph (Lovecraftian, personage): A masterful Dreamlands explorer (and time traveler?), originally hailing from 20th century Boston.

Cavalcade (n.): A procession of many (particularly noble) persons.

Celephaïs (Lovecraftian, n.): An especially lovely and fantastical city of the Dreamlands.

Centipedal (adj.): Reminiscent of a centipede.

Cephalopod (n.): A tentacled creature (such as an octopus, squid, or cuttlefish).

Cephalopodic (adj.): Of or pertaining to a cephalopod.

Chaldean (adj.): Of or pertaining to Chaldea, a region of Babylonia famed for its astronomers, astrologers and Dreamlands wanderers.

Chaugnar Faugn (Lovecraftian, n.): A bizarre and dangerous elephantine Entity, believed to become prominent in the End of Days.

Chitinous (adj.): Reminiscent of chitin (a hard material found in the exoskeletons of insects and spiders).

Choleric (adj.): Highly irritable and prone to anger. By occult extension, of or pertaining to the bodily humour known as choler.

Chronometer (n.): A device used to measure the passing of time; a watch. (It is implied that a chronometer is more advanced than a watch, however.)

Chthonic (adj.): Of or associated with the supernatural entities of the netherworld.

Codswallowing (Kentian, adj., vb.): In such a manner that sheer and utter nonsense is allowed to run amuck.

Coleopterous (Lovecraftian, adj., n.): A hardy species of intelligent beetles which will thrive after the extinction of humanity. In speaking of them, Ms. Liddell foolishly mistakes them for an entirely different arachnid species that will reign until the end of the Earth itself. What an amateur!

Comfit (Victorian, n.): A pungent or nutty piece of candy.

Corpulent (adj.): Bloated, fat, fleshy.

Crapulence (n.): Temporary illness caused by ingesting too much food or drink.

Crudivore (n.): A creature that eats only raw, or still-alive, food.

Cthulhoid (Lovecraftian/Kentian, adj.): Reminiscent of Cthulhu.

Cthulhu (Lovecraftian, n.): A dead and dreaming Great Old One who lies entombed in the sunken city of R'lyeh, who will very soon bring about the slaughter of humanity.

Cucumber-Frame (Victorian, n.): A small glass box, used to encourage the growth of cucumbers.

Cultes des Goules (Lovecraftian, title): A dreadful tome, filled with revelations concerning the cannibalistic Ghoul cults of subterranean Paris.

Curiouser (Carrollian, adj.): For more curious than just plain “curious” in and of itself.

Cyclopean (adj.): Architecture or landscaping fit for use by (or created by) a Cyclops, which is to say, gigantic.

Dagon (Lovecraftian, n.): The eldest of the Deep Ones, who serves as a “high priest” and nightmare conduit between his own race, human victims and Cthulhu.

Darkling (n., vb.): (Verb) Being nocturnal, dark, or shadowed. (Noun, Kentian) A person who, by nature, prefers such conditions.

Deanery (Victorian, n.): The residence occupied by a Dean. Specifically in this instance, the home of the Liddell family at Christ Church, Oxford.

Delaporean (Lovecraftian, adj.): Likely a reference to the infamous Delapore (de la Poer) family, who were driven mad and then devoured by rats. Mostly.

Demonomaniacal (Kentian, adj.): Being both demoniac (of a demon) and maniacal, all at once.

Desiccated (adj.): Completely dehydrated and bereft of all fluids.

Dhol Chants (Lovecraftian, n.): A cryptic series of sung invocations, used to summon the various manifestations of Nyarlathotep.

Dimensional Shambler (Lovecraftian, n.): Space-time predators known for their relatively benign, yet still extremely hazardous, disposition.

Discombobulatedly (Kentian, adv.): In such a way that discombobulation (extreme confusion) affects both the doer and the observer.

Dreamlands (Lovecraftian, n.): The Earth-like alternate dimension of idealized phantasy and fear, which can only be reached by mortals who enter a deep, consensual dream state. (Wonderland can arguably be regarded as unique subterranean province within the Dreamlands.)

Ducat (n.): A gold coin, issued and favored in medieval Venice.

Eld (adj.): Old. (Implied: Very old, and perhaps eldritch as well.)

Elder Sign (Lovecraftian, n.): A branch-like occult sign, formed through hand gestures of graven upon doors, which is rumored to ward off various horrific Entities (while certainly attracting others).

Elder Thing (Lovecraftian, n.): A member of an exceedingly ancient and hyper-intelligent vegetable species, known to have dwelt in the Mountains of Madness in Antarctica.

Eldritch (adj.): Eerie, ancient and/or bizarre.

Elixir (n.): A healing potion or liquid remedy, perhaps occult or alchemical in nature.

Essential Saltes (Lovecraftian, n.): An alchemical mixture believed to be derived from dead bodies, which is often exploited by necromancers to bring about the reanimation of corpses.

Exo-Geography (n.): The study of the terrain of planets located outside of our own Solar system.

Exsanguined (adj.): Having been made bloodless.

Felines from Saturn (Lovecraftian, n.): Enormous, elaborate cats from the planet Saturn, who are known to prey upon their lesser cousins.

Fhtagn (Lovecraftian, vb.): A word, perhaps in the Aklo tongue, which may mean “dreaming.” In this case, “dreaming” means “plotting the ultimate slaughter of humanity while trapped in a dead body.”

Fireworm (Lovecraftian, n.): This may be a reference to the combustible mega-vermes who in the Forest of Parg.

Flibbertigibbetish (Kentian, adj.): “Similar to a flibbertigibbet,” which refers to a person possessed by a very talkative demon.

Flying Polyp (Lovecraftian, n.): A specimen of the extremely deadly Polypous Race, which dwells beneath the Earth and uses sucking winds to tear apart prey from quite a distance.

Foetid (adj.): Fetid (antiquated). Stinky.

Foetor (n.): Fetor (antiquated). A stench.

Forfend (vb.): To forbid (antiquated).

Frabjous (Carrollian, adj.): A portmanteau of “fabulous” and “joyous.”

Frumious (Carrollian, adj.): A portmanteau of “fuming” and “furious.”

Galumphing (Carrollian, adj., vb.): A portmanteau of “galloping” and “triumph”; in other words, to proudly walk in a thoroughly rambunctious manner.

Galumphous (Carrollian, adj.): Galumphing, or at least filled with the urge to do so.

Gangrenous (adj.): Afflicted with gangrene (infection, decay, or necrosis of the flesh).

Gauntling (Kentian, n.): A young Nightgaunt. Specifically, one less than an aeon eld.

Ghast (Lovecraftian, n.): A highly dangerous bipedal humanoid, similar to a Ghoul but more loathsome and degraded.

Ghastly (Lovecraftian, adj.): Appalling, horrific. In Lovecraftian parlance, more accurately, Ghastly (capitalized) means “reminding one of a Ghast.”

Ghoulish (Lovecraftian, adj.): Morbid, cannibalistic, disturbing. In Lovecraftian parlance, more accurately, Ghoulish (capitalized) means “acting in the manner of (or resembling) a Ghoul.”

Gimbling (Carrollian, adj., vb.): Moving in a way reminiscent of a gimlet (a small metal tool), boring holes into leather or other flesh.

Gnorr (Lovecraftian, n.): Plural, Gnorri. One of the truly disturbing, serpentine “mermen” of the Dreamlands.

Gorgonian (adj.): Reminding one of a gorgon (a monster whose gaze would turn any beholder to stone), such as Medusa.

Great Old Ones (Lovecraftian, n.): Unique and eternal beings of extreme sentience, known for their favored hobbies (slaughter inferiors, invoking terror, and feasting upon entire planets).

Grimalkin (n.): A large, old, cantankerous cat.

Grimoire (n.): A spellbook, or book of the occult.

Gug (Lovecraftian, n.): A huge, hairy and rather beastly giant of the netherworld.

Hadean (adj.): Reminding one of Hades, the Greek netherworld of the judged dead.

Haemophore (Lovecraftian, n.): An Entity which exists solely to cause mischief and drink the blood of stolen children.

Hand of Glory (n.): An occult relic made from the hand of a dead man, with the fingertips decorated by candles.

Haruspicia (Latin, n.): The practice of prophetic divination by studying the entrails of a sacrificial victim.

Hastur (Lovecraftian, n.): A ravening, mysterious Entity who dwells eternally in the Lake of Hali.

Hasturian (Lovecraftian, adj.): Pertaining to Hastur (a ravening, mysterious Entity who dwells eternally in the Lake of Hali).

Hierophantic (adj.): Similar to a hierophant (a ritual priest of the Eleusinian Mysteries in ancient Greece).

Hound of Tindalos (Lovecraftian, n.): A predatory hyper-dimensional quadruped, vaguely reminiscent of a huge, vampiric dog.

Hyperborean (adj.): From, or bearing qualities of, the lost kingdom of Hyperborea (the land which lies beyond the northern wind.)

Hyper-Geometrical (adj.): Angular or complex in a mathematical way, resonating with those dimensions which lie higher than the third.

Iä (Lovecraftian, int.): A celebratory interjection, perhaps in the Aklo tongue, which may be roughly translated as “behold.”

Ibling (Lovecraftian/Kentian, adj.): Bearing points of resemblance shared with a Being of Ib.

Ibn Shacabao (Lovecraftian, personage): The “Son of Shacabao,” believed to have been an Arabian or Yemeni alchemist of some importance.

Ichor (n.): A black, acidic, aethereal substance—roughly akin to gluey blood—which is found in the veins of corporeal supernatural Entities.

Ichthyoid (adj.): Fishy.

Ignis Fatuus (Latin, n.): The “foolish fire,” or will-o’-the-wisp, which is believed to be the phosphorescence of decaying swamp gas.

Immolated (adj., vb.): Sacrificed (or prepared for sacrifice) in a destructive, sometimes incendiary fashion.

Inganokian (Lovecraftian/Kentian, adj.): From the region of Inganok, a wondrous place in the Dreamlands.

Innsmouth (Lovecraftian, n.): An old seaside village in America, infested with Deep Ones (an amphibious race which preys upon humans and worships Cthulhu.)

Iron Maiden (n.): A body-enclosing torture device, involving an unsurvivable array of impaling spikes.

Jabberwock (Carrollian, n.): A nonesuch draconian monster, believed to be a carnal harbinger of the rising of Cthulhu (the Great Old One who shall reign over Earth in the End of Days).

Jabberwockian (Carrollian/Kentian, adj.): Reminding one of the Jabberwock (a nonesuch draconian monster).

Jermyn (Lovecraftian, personages): A cursed bloodline whose heirs are afflicted with bestial degeneration (specifically, degeneration into savage ape-like primates).

Jub-Jub Bird (Carrollian, n.): A dangerous predatory bird, primarily found lurking and hooting on Jabberwock Isle.

Justiciar (n.): An antiquarian judicial magistrate of considerable importance.

K'n-yan (Lovecraftian, n.): A region of the netherworld, filled with telepathic worshippers of Tsathoggua.

Kadath (Lovecraftian, n.): An enormous castle, in which the Great Ones (pagan gods of the Dreamlands) are imprisoned by Nyarlathotep.

Kadathian (Lovecraftian/Kentian, adj.): Of or pertaining to Kadath. By extension, it means “mysterious and tempting, in the most mysterious and tempting ways imaginable.”

Kaman-Thah (Lovecraftian, personage): An ancient priest who kindly warns (some of) those dreamers who are about to unknowingly enter the Dreamlands.

Kitab al-Azif (Lovecraftian, title): The “Book of the Sibilliance,” the original title of the occult tome which would later be known as the Necronomicon.

Kleptomaniacal (adj.): Afflicted with kleptomania (the compulsion to snatch or steal).

Lachrymal (adj.): Involving or featuring tears.

Lemurian (adj.): From, or reminding one, of the ancient land of Lemuria.

Leng (Lovecraftian, n.): A frigid waste of the Dreamlands, preventing mortal access to the citadel of Kadath.

Leptous (adj.): Scaly, as if afflicted with leprosy.

Lovecraftian (adj.): In such a manner that the style of American author Howard Phillips Lovecraft is evoked or imitated. As such, “Lovecraftian” may mean eerie, frightening, cosmic, erudite, eccentric or otherworldly.

Manxome (Carrollian, adj.): Fearsome and island-dwelling. The word is probably derived from “Manx,” meaning “from the Isle of Man.”

Mason, Keziah (Lovecraftian, personage): An ancient witch and worshipper of the Great Old Ones, who uses Rat-Things and teleportation to capture young innocent dreamers. (It is believed, much like Elizabeth Bathory, she bathes in the blood of virgins to keep herself from dying.)

Mastication (n.): The act of chewing.

Mausolean (adj.): Immense and morbid, in the manner of a mausoleum (an elaborate pillared tomb).

Meeped (Lovecraftian, vb.): To have made a muttering, squeaking sound (much like a Ghoul).

Melancholia (Latin, n.): A feeling of inescapable doom and depression (melancholy). When in the Latin (melancholia), it implies a biochemical condition caused by an imbalance of the person's humours.

Men of Leng (Lovecraftian, n.): The cruel, primordial satyr-race of the Dreamlands.

Metamorphosed (vb.): Having experienced metamorphosis (a drastic change of body and/or mind, such as that experienced by a caterpillar becoming a butterfly).

Metamorphosis (n.): A drastic change of body and/or mind, such as that experienced by a caterpillar becoming a butterfly.

Metatarsal (n.): Informally (and slightly incorrectly), a bone of the foot.

Metaverse (n.): The entire continuum of all possible universes, when regarded as a unified whole.

Miasmal (adj.): In the manner of a miasma (a stinky, dangerous gas, such as that emitted by decaying corpses).

Miasmally (adv.): In such a way that brings to mind a miasma (a stinky, dangerous gas, such as that emitted by decaying corpses).

Mi-Go (Lovecraftian, n.): A name for the Fungi from Yuggoth, a highly advanced race of extra-terrestrial parasites.

Miskatonic University (Lovecraftian, n.): The pre-eminent school of occult and forbidden knowledge in America.

Mixtion (n.): A mixture (antiquated), especially one created through alchemy or an occult ritual.

Möbius Loop (n.): A self-connecting shape featuring only a single surface, somewhat similar to an infinity symbol.

Mock Moonbeast (Lovecraftian/Carrollian/Kentian, n.): A bizarre monstrosity spawned by some devastating alchemical accident. It bears the conjoined features of a calf, a turtle, and a Moonbeast.

Moonbeast (Lovecraftian, n.): An immense, toad-like creature which dwells on the Blackest Moon (which whorls over the Dreamlands).

Mother Hydra (Lovecraftian, n.): An enormous and ancient female Deep One, the consort of Father Dagon. She is believed to be the progenitor of the entire Deep One race.

Mouldering (adj.): Moldering (antiquated), crumbling, decaying.

Mountains of Madness (Lovecraftian, n.): The highest and most ancient mountain range on Earth, hidden in Antarctica. The Mountains hide extra-dimensional vortices to the Plateau of Leng, created by the resident Elder Things.

Mummer (n.): A mummified corpse (antiquated), particularly an animated one. Also, a folk dancer celebrating an ancient festival.

Mycologic (adj.): Dealing with or reminding one of mycology (the study of fungi).

Mythos (n.): A system of interrelated supernatural Entities, events, places and objects. In Lovecraftian parlance, “the Mythos” implies the stories featuring Cthulhu, the other Great Old Ones, and similar horrors.

N’kai (Lovecraftian, n.): A huge, deep cavern where the Great Old One, Tsathoggua, lurks as he plots the End of All.

Nasht (Lovecraftian, personage): The younger, perkier sidekick of Kaman-Thah.

Necromancer (n.): A dread sorcerer who speaks to or reanimates the dead.

Necromantic (adj.): Of or to pertaining to black magic (death magic, zombification, Ghoul rituals, reanimation, etc.).

Necronomicon (Lovecraftian, title): The pre-eminent tome of forbidden knowledge, explaining the true, unfeeling nature of the metaverse in such a way that all of its readers eventually go mad.

Necrophage (n.): An eater of the dead.

Necrophagous (adj.): In the manner of one who feasts on the dead.

Necropolis (n.): An immense and mazelike cemetery, particularly one that is at least partly underground.

Nepenthe (n.): A feeling of amnesia, or the forgetting of all sorrow. Also, a concoction or food that brings about such a condition.

Nephren-Ka (Lovecraftian, personage): The Pharaonic, time-traveling manifestation of Nyarlathotep; the shape with which he deceives and beguiles aspirant necromancers.

Nictitating (adj.): Winking frequently.

Nightgaunt (Lovecraftian, n.): A race of bat-winged humanoids who serve the unknowable god of the cosmos, Nodens.

Nihil (n.): Nothingness, un-creation.

Nitre (n.): Potassium nitrate, a salt used in the embalming of the dead.

Nodens (Lovecraftian, n.): A (relatively!) kind and benevolent god, who reigns over the unknowable cosmos.

Non-Euclidean (adj.): Informally, angular in such a hyperbolic way that the physical laws of the third dimension are violated.

Nth (adj.): The degree of a polynomial, where N represents a natural number. In this instance, it refers to an optical device which allows the simultaneous viewing of several dimensions.

Nyarlahotep (Lovecraftian, n.): The immense, eternal being who harbors the mind of Azathoth, and encourages humans to learn of their hopeless, meaningless place in all the universes.

Obfuscated (adj., vb.): Hidden, veiled, or confused.

Obliviated (Kentian, adj., vb.): Thrown irrevocably into oblivion.

Octopoid (adj.): In the manner of (or bearing the features of) an octopus.

Oneiroidynian (Kentian, adj.): Bearing the marks of primordial, subterranean nightmare.

Ooth-Nargai (Lovecraftian, n.): An obscure, yet lovely, valley of the Dreamlands.

Orichalcum (n.): An alchemical metal (derived from copper), purported to have supernatural qualities.

“Ou est ma chatte?” (French, phrase): “Where is my cat?”

Oubliette (n.): A very small dungeon cell.

Outer God (Lovecraftian, n.): A hyper-intelligent pantheon of incomprehensible gods who reside in Chaos, far beyond our own dimension.

Outgribing (Carrollian, adj., vb.): Bellowing, whistling and sneezing, all at once.

Paduan Herbalist (n.): This is likely a reference to the apprentices of Dr. Rappaccini of Padua, the accidental poisoner who indirectly killed his daughter Beatrice.

Pandemoniacal (adj.): In the frenzied manner of a horror from Pandemonium (the city of all demons, believed to lie deep in the netherworld).

Pentacular (adj.): Bearing the angles of a pentacle (a star-shaped, five-pointed diagram.)

Phanerozoic (adj.): The current scientific eon of the Earth's chronology. It could mean "geologically recent," but in practice it means "very old indeed, perhaps as old as 500 million years."

Phantabulous (adj.): Fantabulous (antiquated), a portmanteau of "fantasy" and "fabulous." In short, "otherworldly."

Phantasmagoric (adj.): Evoking a phantasmagoria (a display of extremely convincing hallucinations or illusions).

Phantasmal (adj.): In the manner of a phantasm (a realistic illusion of a person, thing or monstrosity).

Phantastic (adj.): Fantastic (antiquated); unreal, unbelievable.

Phial (n.): Vial (antiquated); a small glass bottle used to store potions or poisons.

Phlegmatic (adj.): Phlegmy. In an occult sense, it alludes to phlegm as one of the body's humours.

Phlogiston (n.): The (highly volatile) alchemical extraction of fire.

"Ph'nglui mglw'nafh Cthulhu R'lyeh wgah'nagl fhtagn" (Lovecraftian, phrase): Translated (perhaps from the Aklo tongue), this means "In his house at R'lyeh, dead Cthulhu lies dreaming." In other words, the imprisoned Entity who will rise and destroy the Earth is thinking about it, long and hard.

Phosphorescent (adj.): Softly glowing, due to bioluminescence.

Pickman (Lovecraftian, personages): A well-respected Bostonian clan of painters, dreamers, and eaters of the dead.

Plutonian (adj.): Of or pertaining to Pluto. Pluto can mean either the tenth planet of our Solar system, or the title of Hades, god of the netherworld.

Pointilism (n.): Art composed of many tiny dots. Here, the implication appears to be that three-dimensional beings can be reduced to the first dimension by some mysterious ritual.

Polypous (adj.): Covered with polyps (mucus-covered flesh growths).

Precambrian (adj.): From the prior eon of Earth's chronology. In practice, something that is Precambrian is at least 542 million years old.

Predation (n.): The act of hunting and eating prey.

Procrustean (adj.): Constricting and murderous.

Proto-Shoggoth (Lovecraftian, n.): A multi-sentient pool protoplasm, from which Shoggoths (giant amoeboid monstrosities) are formed.

Proto-Uttarakhandian (Kentian, adj.): Pertaining to the lost root language of Sanskrit (that strain which predates the city-state of Uttarakhand).

Pseudopod (n.): A temporary, tentacle-like limb, constructed from protoplasm.

Pseudopodal (adj.): In the manner of a pseudopod (a temporary, tentacle-like limb, constructed from protoplasm).

Psion (Kentian, n.): A telepath.

Psionically (Gygaxian, adj.): In such a way that psionics (telepathic powers) are implied.

Puppy of Tindalos (Lovecraftian/Kentian, n.): The larval form of a Hound of Tindalos, as born to a Bitch of Tindalos.

Pustulant (adj.): Covered in pustules (blister-like sores filled with pus).

Pustule (n.): A blister-like sore, filled with pus.

Putrefacted (adj, vb.): Having falling victim to putrefaction; decayed.

Quadrille (Victorian, n.): An elaborate formal dance, popular in 18th and 19th century England.

Quasi-Ginormous (Kentian, adj.): Seemingly ginormous (a portmanteau of "gigantic" and "enormous").

Quintessence (n.): The rarefied "fifth element" which binds the universe's alchemical air (gas), earth (solid), fire (energy) and water (liquid) together.

R'lyeh (Lovecraftian, n.): The ancient and sunken city in which the Great Cthulhu resides, healing his dead body in preparation for the End of Days.

Rat-Thing (Lovecraftian, n.): A cruel race of human-faced rats. These nasty little witches' familiars are believed to be created through the sprinkling of decaying rats with Essential Saltes.

Reanimator (Lovecraftian, n.): A scientist who practices electric or occult necromancy (the reanimation of the dead).

Reticulated (adj.): Covered or arranged in a mesh.

Rhan-Tegoth (Lovecraftian, n.): An exceedingly malevolent Great Old One, known for his strangling tendencies.

Rictus (adj., n.): A forced grin, caused not by joy but by death, agony, or muscular paralysis.

Rugose (adj.): Covered in alternating wrinkles and ridges.

Sanguinary (adj.): Bloody. A jesting swear word shared between English occultists.

Sanies (n.): A greenish fluid discharged by infected wounds.

Sanskrit (n.): An ancient Indo-European language.

Scabrously (adv.): In a scabrous fashion. (Scabrous meaning, in this instance, covered with scabs.)

Schadenfreude (n.): Delight in the suffering of others.

Schlorp (Kentian, vb.): To suck and squelch in a terrifyingly noisy fashion.

Sepulchral (adj.): Reminding one of a sepulcher (an ancient tomb).

Serpent People (Lovecraftian, n.): A bipedal race of viper-humanoids, which enslaved mankind to build its cities, but which was then nearly wiped out by the ungrateful little wretches.

Servitor (n.): A servant. Formally, the eternally bound thrall of a supernatural Entity.

Seven Cryptical Books of Hsan (Lovecraftian, title): A collection of obscure and riddling spellbooks pertaining to the Great Old Ones.

Shaggai (Lovecraftian, n.): A fetid planet ruled by alien insects.

Shantak-Bird (Lovecraftian, n.): A pterodactyl-like monstrosity which soars through the frigid aether of the Dreamlands.

Shoggoth (Lovecraftian, n.): A gigantic, amoeboid Thing which is far more intelligent and calculating than it should be.

Shub-Niggurath (Lovecraftian, n.): A primordial fertility goddess, known for her poisonous fecundity, profusion of tentacles, and over-enthusiastic worshippers.

Sigil (n.): An ancient runic symbol, particularly one of warding, personal attribution or portal identification.

Sign of Koth (Lovecraftian, n.): A warning symbol inscribed on walls and doors throughout the Dreamlands, believed to mark the borderlands between reality, dream and other dimensions.

Silver Key (Lovecraftian, n.): An ancient arabesque key which opens the doors to the Dreamlands, the unknown, and several of the higher dimensions.

Slithily (Carrollian, adv.): In a slithy fashion (slithy meaning “lithe,” “slimy” and “slithering.”)

Slithy (Carrollian, adv.): Lithe and slimy.

Snark (Carrollian, n.): A disastrously perilous supernatural creature, created by the stray fears and secret doubts of foolish adventurers.

Somnambulist (n.): A sleepwalker.

Space Mead (Lovecraftian, n.): A highly unstable concoction which, when consumed, is believed to protect the drinker from supernatural abduction.

Spawn of Tsathoggua (Lovecraftian, n.): An amorphous race of very slimy pools, filled with translucent fangs and eyeballs.

Squamous (adj.): Covered with dry, decaying scales.

Star Spawn (Lovecraftian, n.): The race of gigantic octopoid Horrors which is reigned over by Great Cthulhu. Most are believed to be imprisoned in R'lyeh, and therefore of a somewhat irascible disposition.

Strangeling (Kentian, n., adj.): One who is strange, not by habit but rather through his or her own nature. As an adjective, strange in such a way that the strangeness shall remain eternal.

Susurrating (adj.): Emitting a susurrus (a rustling, whispering sound).

Talismanic (adj.): Bearing the properties of a talisman (an occult amulet with supernatural powers, typically of summoning or protection).

Tatterdemalion (n.): A hermit dressed in rags. Allusively, an intimated title of the King in Yellow.

Tcho-Tcho (Lovecraftian, n.): A degenerate race of supernatural, bloodthirsty cannibals.

“Tekeli-li” (Poesque/Lovecraftian, phrase): A dire phrasing in the Elder Tongue, which is believed to mean “Obey my commands!” Depending on the circumstances, it can also be interpreted as “The horror ... the horror ...”

Teleportation (n.): The act of instantaneously moving from one point to another, without traversing the spaces in between.

Tenebrous (adj.): Deeply shadowed.

Tentaculoid (adj.): Covered with (or exhibiting the properties of) tentacles.

Thaumaturge (n.): A practitioner of thaumaturgy (the working of impossible acts of wonder).

Threnody (n.): A love song for the dead.

Tindalos (Lovecraftian, n.): The shadowy, nightmarish homeworld of the hyper-dimensional Hounds who prey upon us.

Toadling (Kentian, n.): A toad-like larval creature, found in enormous clusters (such as the brood of a Gnorr).

Transmogrify (vb.): To grotesquely change the shape of a creature (especially one's self, or a beloved friend).

Trapezohedron (n.): A crystal covered with trapezium facets. More simply, a many-faced crystal.

Treacle (Victorian, n.): Mineral water, syrup or a liquid medicine purported to have healing properties.

Treacle Well (Victorian, n.): A well or spring from which treacle is drawn.

Trepidacious (adj.): Full of trepidation (a condition of tremors, caused by wariness or fear).

Troglodytic (adj.): Pertaining to troglodytes (cave-dwelling degenerates).

Tsathoggua (Lovecraftian, n.): A bloated, netherworldy Great Old One, not known for his skills in entertaining or social functions.

Tulgey Wood (Carrollian, n.): "Tulgey" can be understood to mean "tumored" and "bulgy," which means an ancient forest filled with disturbingly twisted trees.

Tumescent (adj.): Filled with conflicting ideas and emotions.

Tumorous (adj.): Covered or filled with tumors.

Tumtum Tree (Carrollian, n.): A timeless species of the willow, engendering feelings of calm and wisdom, which only grows in the most remote corners of the Dreamlands.

Uffish (Carrollian, adj.): Gruff, rough and huffing, all at once.

Ulthar (Lovecraftian, n.): A city of the Dreamlands, filled with cats. Cats are regarded as supernatural guardians of the human race, interceding

on their behalf between mortality and Horror.

Unbeheld (Kentian, adj.): Not yet seen.

Vale of Pnath (Lovecraftian, n.): An immense canyon valley of the Dreamlands, filled to the brim with bones and burrowing Horrors.

Vellum (n.): A writing surface made from cured goatskin, or similarly fragile flesh.

Vermilion (adj.): Shockingly red.

Vigintillion (n.): The number 1, followed by either 63 or 120 zeroes, depending on who you ask.

Viperous (adj.): In the manner of a viper.

Vituperator (n.): Someone who speaks in a cruel and abusive manner. By Kentian extension, a Herald of Wonderland.

Vomitous (adj.): Worthy of, or looking and smelling like, vomit.

Voonith (Lovecraftian, n.): A howling, amphibious snake, much like a moray eel crossbred with a nightmare.

Voorish Sign (Lovecraftian, n.): An obscure symbol intended to distract or confuse supernatural entities who are hunting for a particularly naughty and tasty mortal.

Vorpal (Carrollian, adj.): Astral, arcane, dangerously magical.

Walpurgis (n.,adj.): An ancient feast day, believed to be highly important for many summoning rituals. A time when the veils between the worlds are thin.

Wamp (Lovecraftian, n.): A many-legged, spidery Horror from the Dreamlands, which rises out of festering corpses. These Things are so gooey and terrible that even Ghouls are horrified by them.

Whateley (Lovecraftian, personage): A degenerate clan of the Americas (more than most), reviled for their enthusiasm in bringing about the summoning of Yog-Sothoth, and so the rising of R'lyeh and the End of Days.

Wormius (Lovecraftian, personage): A reference to Olaus Wormius, the insane Dominican monk who translated and propagated the Latin edition of the Necronomicon. Indirectly responsible for the extinction of all humanity.

Y'ha-nthlei (Lovecraftian, n.): An ancient, underwater city of the Deep Ones.

Yaddith (Lovecraftian, n.): A five-starred planet, occupied by “wizards” of immeasurable scientific powers.

Yellow Sign (Lovecraftian, n.): The ever-squirming, mind-blasting symbol of the King in Yellow.

Yithian (Lovecraftian/Kentian, adj.): A member of the time-traveling Great Race of Yith, or something from their homeworld.

Yog (Kentian, n.): An affectionate monosyllable for the horrific Entity, Yog-Sothoth, much in the same manner as “Charles” is shortened to “Chuck.”

Yog-Sothoth (Lovecraftian, n.): One of the most powerful Entities in all the metaverse, believed to embody the spheres (gateways) between all times and dimensions.

Yuggoth (Lovecraftian, n.): A remote, shadowy ice planet (known to mere mortals as Pluto).

Yuggothian (Lovecraftian/Kentian, adj.): Originating on the remote, shadowy ice planet of Yuggoth (known to mere mortals as Pluto).

Zoog (Lovecraftian, n.): An impish, furry and goblin-like creature of the Dreamlands.

Zymotic (adj.): Fermenting, spoiling.